Directed by Academy Award® winner Steven Spielberg, from a screenplay by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award® winner Tony Kushner, "West Side Story" tells the classic tale of fierce rivalries and young love in 1957 New York City.

This reimagining of the beloved musical stars Ansel Elgort (Tony); Ariana DeBose (Anita); David Alvarez (Bernardo); Mike Faist (Riff); Brian d'Arcy James (Officer Krupke); Corey Stoll (Lieutenant Schrank); Josh Andrés Rivera (Chino); with Rita Moreno (as Valentina, who owns the corner store in which Tony works); and introducing Rachel Zegler (María). Moreno – one of only three artists to be honored with Academy®, Emmy®, GRAMMY®, Tony® and Peabody Awards – also serves as one of the film's executive producers.

Bringing together the best of both Broadway and Hollywood, the film's creative team includes Kushner, who also served as an executive producer; Tony Award® winner Justin Peck, who choreographed the musical numbers in the film; renowned Los Angeles Philharmonic conductor and GRAMMY® winner Gustavo Dudamel, who helmed the recording of the iconic score; Academy Award®-nominated composer and conductor David Newman ("Anastasia"), who arranged the score; Tony Award®-winning composer Jeanine Tesori ("Fun Home," "Thoroughly Modern Millie"), who supervised the cast on vocals; and GRAMMY®-nominated music supervisor Matt Sullivan ("Beauty and

the Beast," "Chicago"), who serves as executive music producer for the film. "West Side Story" is produced by Spielberg, p.g.a., Academy Award®-nominated producer Kristie Macosko Krieger, p.g.a. and Tony Award®-winning producer Kevin McCollum.

"West Side Story" has been adapted for the screen from the original 1957 Broadway show. Original choreography by Jerome Robbins, based on the stage play, book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, play conceived, directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, music by Leonard Bernstein.

From 20th Century Studios, The Walt Disney Company will release "West Side Story" in U.S. theaters on December 10, 2021.

ABOUT THE FILM

"This film is probably the most daunting of my career. 'West Side Story' is arguably the greatest score ever written in the theater, and that's not lost on any of us," Steven Spielberg says.

"It's very intimidating to take a masterpiece and make it through different eyes and different sensibilities without compromising the integrity of what is generally considered the greatest music ever written for the theater. But I believe that great stories should be told over and over again, in part to reflect different perspectives and moments in time into the work.

"I love the original film made by Robert Wise with Jerome Robbins. Wise was a close friend of mine for many, many years, and I talked to him about the movie ad nauseam. And Walter Mirisch, who produced 'West Side Story' [1961], is another dear friend who told me all kinds of great stories of making the film.

"You have to demand of yourself, over and over again, justification for treading on what feels like sacred ground. We all did that. The riskiness of this enterprise was not lost on any of us. But everyone involved entered this project with tremendous love and respect, bordering on reverence, for the show and obviously for its legendary creators. But we also knew we had to make a movie for our times and make it with a contemporary understanding and with contemporary values that we subscribe to.

"What is so wonderful about this story is that, no matter how much the world around us changes, the lessons and insights it offers us do not. It's a story that has captivated audiences for decades because it is not just a love story, but also a culturally significant work with a central premise – that love transcends prejudice and intolerance – that hasn't lost its relevance over time.

"'West Side Story' means so much to so many, and I'm thrilled to have this chance to give it new life and share it with a new audience."

THE MUSICAL'S ORIGINS

The musical "West Side Story" is more than just a classic film and a historic, seminal Broadway production. It's an American cultural symbol, beloved by a wide international public; since it hit Broadway in 1957, it has been continuously revived both professionally and in amateur productions in countries throughout the world.

Spielberg emphasizes, "In the theater, 'West Side Story' has been performed all over the world, from high schools to community theaters to Broadway revivals. Part of its power is its ability to be restaged and reimagined."

"West Side Story" – created by four undisputed geniuses, director and choreographer Jerome Robbins, composer Leonard Bernstein, lyricist Stephen Sondheim and playwright Arthur Laurents – premiered on Broadway September 26, 1957 at the Winter Garden Theater and ran for 732 performances.

The show had a long gestation period. Robbins first conceived such a musical in 1949, working with a plot he and Bernstein outlined that concerned the conflict between an Irish Catholic family and a Jewish family living on the Lower East Side. In 1955, after a meeting with Laurents, so the story goes, the playwright and screenwriter put forth a scenario of two teenage gangs in New York, one of them being newly arrived Puerto Ricans and the other working-class descendants of European immigrants.

The project took shape and began to coalesce, and though financing was not easy to obtain, rehearsals got underway in July 1957. After a Washington, D.C. tryout, the show opened on Broadway in September of that year to excellent reviews, winning Tony Awards® for Robbins and set designer Oliver Smith.

According to Alexander Bernstein, the composer's son, the show wasn't a giant hit, however. "That happened when the movie came out three and a half years later."

The 1961 Robert Wise-Jerome Robbins film of "West Side Story" was a monumental success. It went on to win ten Academy Awards®, for the direction by Robbins and Wise, for acting by Rita Moreno and George Chakiris, and for cinematography, editing and more. It was the beginning of the musical's emergence as a cultural phenomenon.

As Bernstein's daughter Jamie Bernstein recounts, in addition to the 1961 movie, there have been four Broadway revivals and countless regional productions in theaters throughout the country and abroad, as well as productions in movie houses, high school and college auditoriums, a punk-rock version, a one-woman retelling by Cher and a production in Milan's renowned La Scala opera house.

The time had long come for a reimagining on film by a master of cinema.

The word that Spielberg was interested in remaking the film had been circulating in Hollywood and on Broadway for several years, as it was widely understood how much the director loved the property.

"My mother played the piano, and music was a great love of both my parents," Spielberg says. "My sisters and I grew up listening to my mom's repertoire: Schuman, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Shostakovich. I think it was her love of music, combined with my insatiable appetite to understand everything about movies and movie making, that led me to start collecting motion picture soundtrack albums when I was young, around ten or eleven years old. I'm not sure who got the soundtrack album for 'West Side Story,' or if my parents had already bought the Broadway cast album before the film was released, but I know I loved it the first time I listened to it. "As a kid I could sing every one of its songs by heart – and I did sing them, at dinner, till I wore out the patience of everybody in my family. The score feels like it's always been part of my DNA. I didn't know how, exactly, but it's always seemed inevitable to me that eventually I'd find some way to work on 'West Side Story.'"

At the same time that it was becoming clear that Spielberg was seriously interested in directing a new adaptation of the film, Broadway producer Kevin McCollum ("Rent," "In the Heights") was also eager to produce a new film version. When McCollum met the filmmaker on the set of the NBC television series "Smash" – which Spielberg executive produced – McCollum broached the subject of the film.

At that point Spielberg's desire to reimagine "West Side Story" had only increased; he had already discussed collaborating with one of his longtime collaborators, the Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist Tony Kushner, to write the screenplay. Kushner had written the scripts for two of Spielberg's previous hits, "Munich" and "Lincoln." The involvement of Kushner only added to the buzz.

"I was obsessed with the original cast album of 'West Side Story,'" Kushner says. "I was only four when the film came out, so I'm not sure when I first saw it, probably in college. It's a great film, immensely influential, and I loved it a lot. I saw it on stage for the first time in Arthur Laurents' revival. There's no other musical quite like it, it's inarguably among the best ever written. 'West Side Story' redefined the form as much as Rogers and Hammerstein had redefined it a generation before.

"I knew that Steven's mother was a pianist, and he'd played the clarinet since he was a kid, and I knew he loved musicals. After we made 'Lincoln,' he told me that he wanted to make a film of 'West Side Story,' and he asked me to do the screenplay. I was really intrigued by his interest in taking it on, amazed as I often am by his chutzpah, his appetite for risk.

"And I was moved by how many of our current struggles Steven felt could be explored in this 60-year-old masterpiece – I guess moved and troubled, in a good way, because the racism, xenophobia, the legacies of colonialism, the effects of poverty, the evils that catalyzed the creation of the musical, are still

very much with us. Steven felt the time was right to take a new look at 'West Side Story,' and he's always been remarkably attuned to the zeitgeist. As we talked, we both came to believe that, proceeding from our shared love and respect for this musical, we could find new and exciting things to try, new ways of bringing this story and this score to the screen."

Producer Kristie Macosko Krieger says, "Tony Kushner is a longtime friend and trusted collaborator. What made Tony perfect for this particular project is his sheer brilliance as a playwright, and as a screenwriter—few can work and live in both worlds, but that's what, and who, 'West Side Story' needed. Steven and I couldn't think of anyone better suited to translate the stage script for the big screen, while also preserving the elements that make seeing it as a live production so memorable."

"Those four guys [Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Laurents, Jerome Robbins, Stephen Sondheim] created a masterwork for the theater," Spielberg says. "It redefined Broadway musicals, it was the first of its kind, utterly original, and no one can capture that kind of lightning-in-a-bottle twice. We understood that, but while we worked to honor this masterwork, to live up to its demands, we also hoped to try to find our way into the energy it took to make something that new, that fresh. 'West Side Story' is both incredibly assured, and also incredibly young. And also, it's deeply true – about love and life and death. I wanted everyone on the creative team to feel part of bringing the profound and beautiful truths of this story to contemporary audiences."

"I realized when we spoke at the time just how much Steven loved 'West Side Story,'" McCollum says. "The show was, as he said, in his DNA, and it was then I got the sense a new movie could really happen. Especially after speaking to David Saint."

David Saint, the executor of Arthur Laurents' estate as well as associate director of the 2009 Broadway production, was all ears when McCollum brought up the subject of a new film.

"Arthur always said we didn't need someone who understands stage musicals to make another version. We really needed a genius of film," Saint says. "Arthur added, 'I want a screenwriter who will respect the essence of what I wrote, not the particulars. He'll recreate the cake, not the frosting.' So, when we heard there was a possibility that Steven Spielberg was interested, I went, well, check that off. That's a cinematic genius. And that Tony Kushner – another genius whom Arthur loved – would be writing the screenplay! Then several years later when I met with Steven Spielberg to discuss the film, I was knocked out by him."

Indeed, several years had elapsed since these early conversations between Spielberg and McCollum, and McCollum and Saint, so the idea of a re-imagining had stalled a bit, until the subject a new film adaptation of "West Side Story" arose during a meeting McCollum took with Emma Watts, the head of production for Twentieth Century Fox at the time.

"I was meeting with Emma when the subject of 'West Side Story' came up. We knew that Steven was interested but there was an issue with rights. I said, 'If you can get me on the phone with Steven Spielberg, I am confident I can get the rights,'" McCollum says. "Emma listened. And the following day one of Steven's associates called me. I knew we were on our way."

THE NEW MOVIE

After completing his film "The Post," Spielberg felt the moment was right to embark on "West Side Story." Although it was still very much in the planning stage, the director's vision was cohering: a fresh, original, unique perspective on the material.

"We needed to discover our voice so that [the new film] would be the same but distinctly different. We didn't want to fix what wasn't broken, but we did want to justify why we were telling the story again," Spielberg says.

"Part of that is the cast. On stage the actors have largely not been Hispanic, and in the 1961 movie they're in their 30s, and many who were portraying the Puerto Ricans are white. I wanted to cast it authentically, to ensure that the actors playing the Shark boys and girls were one hundred percent Latinx, and young."

The director also wanted to make clear in the film the context and landscape in which these rival gangs endured.

"The same wrecking ball was obliterating the turf of each faction, entire neighborhoods being torn down, populations being displaced. All of these kids – Jets and Sharks – were subjected to that upheaval. These kids are fighting for territory that's disappearing before their eyes."

This was an issue the filmmakers would emphasize in their new version, even if, as Spielberg notes, it only increased the enmity between the gangs. Kushner, on the same page, dove into the project with immense enthusiasm, conducting research into the background of the story, especially the destruction of an entire section of the Upper West Side.

The action of the new film occurs in the summer of 1957 on the streets of adjoining Upper West Side neighborhoods, Lincoln Square and San Juan Hill. Together, the neighborhoods encompass the area west of Broadway from West 60th Street to West 70th Street to the very edge of the city at the Hudson River.

In the early 1950s, Robert Moses – the New York City Commissioner for Public Works – razed the entire stretch of land for the construction of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Fordham University, among other projects.

At the time, Lincoln Square was populated by the descendants of people who had immigrated to the U.S. during the 19th Century, mostly from Europe. The residents of San Juan Hill were, mostly, Puerto Ricans who were part of the mass migration from the territory to New York in the wake of World War II. The destruction of the neighborhoods drove most of the area's inhabitants from their homes. For the most part, the city relocated descendants of the early immigrants from Europe, as well as the recent Hispanic arrivals, elsewhere.

The displacement of these populations and its impact on the neighborhoods form a crucial element to Kushner's screenplay. He describes the area at the start of the film as "a vast wasteland of rubble, demolished and partially demolished tenements, crisscrossed by streets, all the way to the Hudson River."

Faithful to Laurents' original libretto, and with the blessings of David Saint, the Leonard Bernstein estate, the Robbins estate and Stephen Sondheim, Kushner dug deep, not only into the history of the destruction of Lincoln Square and San Juan Hill, but also into how it would affect the characters in "West Side Story." In his retelling, Kushner portrays each character in the story as multi-dimensional, with individual backstories that motivate their actions.

Kushner says, "The story is both big and political, yet at its heart it's as private and personal as can be, two young people who fall fiercely in love; but the love that blossoms between them is murdered by the big political world surrounding them. The story is a warning: racism and nativism and poverty are democracy's antitheses and if not resisted and rejected, they will atomize the bonds that hold us together as a society. Love, as they say, is the answer, love can transform the world, it can transform malevolent reality, but love doesn't conquer all, or at least not all threats in the immediate moment. In a context of hatred, love is in danger. And that is tragic, that's the tragedy of 'West Side Story.'"

Going even further, Spielberg and Kushner reconceived one character altogether – the kindly druggist Doc – transforming him into his widow, a nurturing Puerto Rican woman who befriends young Tony. From the start, the role was intended for Rita Moreno, who also joined the project as an executive producer.

Spielberg was immensely excited by Kushner's screenplay.

"Tony called me early on and told me that his husband, Mark, had had a great idea: 'What would you think if Doc is deceased? We still have Doc's Drugstore, but his widow, a Puerto Rican woman, is the proprietor, and we ask Rita Moreno to play her.' And I said, 'What a good idea!' And that began our conversation with Rita Moreno. Rita got so involved in the production, not just as an actor playing Doc's widow, Valentina, but also as our executive producer. She has a completely unique perspective, one that bridges the generations between movies, and makes a living connection between the first film and ours."

Kushner says, “Valentina’s backstory is 25 pages long. It’s like a little novel, starting with her early life in Puerto Rico, and it includes how Tony came to live in the basement of her drugstore. It spans the first half of the 20th century. While I was writing it, I fantasized that I was watching an epic miniseries starring Rita Moreno.”

“What we wanted to do was basically reinvent, explore the characters much more deeply, give them reasons for being who they are,” Spielberg says. “For example, when we meet Tony, he’s just gotten out of prison. It has changed him, right from the start of our film.”

“Arthur Laurents wrote Tony as a good kid from a nice, intact family who’s trying to keep his life on the straight and narrow; he’s somehow innately different from the members of his former gang,” Kushner says. “I wanted to explore what constituted that difference, what had happened to Tony that made his path diverge from Riff and the Jets.”

Spielberg says, “Tony Kushner has really provided depth and color and motivation, much more interplay among the characters. In musicals the audience already comes in with a suspension of disbelief because the genre allows it. Here we’re telling a real street story with real street characters.

“This is ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ but it’s also a very relevant allegory for what’s happening along our borders and for the systems in this country that reject anyone who isn’t white. That’s a big part of our story. The characters say and do things in our ‘West Side Story’ they didn’t say or do on stage or in the 1961 film, and much of that difference came from our determination to explore the story, its historical context, and what the young people of Lincoln Square and San Juan Hill were really like – the Sharks and the Jets. The Puerto Rican community that’s involved in ‘West Side Story’ existed at that time mainly between West 64th and West 72nd Streets. There’s a rich and important history of that community which we wanted to incorporate in our version of the musical,” Spielberg says.

With the screenplay in place, and the studio firmly behind the project, Spielberg and his producer Kristie Macosko Krieger prepared to move forward on multiple interconnected fronts. They assembled a production team, engaged a choreographer to create new dances for the film, initiated a massive worldwide casting search and began an ambitious location scout.

Joining Spielberg on “West Side Story” are many of his longtime collaborators, including director of photography, Academy Award® winner Janusz Kaminski (“Saving Private Ryan,” “The Post”) and Academy Award®-winning production designer Adam Stockhausen (“The Grand Budapest Hotel,” “Bridge of Spies”). Academy Award®-winning editor Michael Kahn (“Saving Private Ryan,” “The Post”) – who has worked with Spielberg for more than four decades – was also on board, as was executive and line producer Daniel Lupi (“Bridge of Spies,” “Phantom Thread”) and executive producer and first assistant director Adam Somner (“Bridge of Spies,” “The Post”).

New to the team are film and stage casting lead Cindy Tolan (“Straight Outta Compton,” “If Beale Street Could Talk”) and noted Broadway costume designer Paul Tazewell, a Tony Award® winner for “Hamilton” and an Emmy Award® winner for “The Wiz Live!” On the music side, Tony Award®-winning composer and arranger Jeanine Tesori (“Fun Home,” “Caroline, Or Change”) came on board as supervising vocal coach, and executive music producer and music supervisor Matt Sullivan (“Hairspray,” “Beauty and the Beast,” “Chicago”) joined the team.

Another addition to the assembled forces was the Tony Award®-winning choreographer Justin Peck (“Carousel”), New York City Ballet’s Resident Choreographer and Artistic Advisor. Gustavo Dudamel – renowned music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and the Paris Opéra – was engaged to conduct the orchestra for music recordings. David Newman, celebrated arranger and conductor who has worked on more than 100 movies, would handle both arrangements, as well as some conducting.

Dudamel says, “‘West Side Story,’ for me, as for all of us in the music world, is part of my DNA. Every single melody in it is so natural and easy for anyone to process. Naturally, it felt right to work with the New York Philharmonic, Bernstein’s own orchestra and have the musicians be part of the new chapter of this masterpiece.”

Justin Peck, one of the foremost choreographers of his generation – who has created more than 35 ballets – was honored and thrilled to be approached by director Spielberg and his team. But he faced a dilemma.

“‘West Side Story’ is a very special musical and dance work for me personally. It inspired me growing up and continues to inspire and influence me as a New York City Ballet dancer and as a choreographer,” Peck says. “New York City Ballet was one of Jerome Robbins’ homes, and in performing his choreography for the piece, I know it inside out.

“I had to think long and hard to see if there was room for me to take my own approach to this material. And obviously I found a way to say, ‘yes.’ One of the reasons was because of Tony Kushner’s script, which is both reverent and respectful to the original, while also having its own point of view, its own language and its own distinction. It helped me understand that I could do something similar with the dance and the movement.

“And the chance to work with Steven Spielberg, Kushner and the whole extraordinary team. I couldn’t possibly say anything but, ‘yes,’ and be thrilled about it.”

CASTING

With the creative team in place, Spielberg and the producers undertook the crucial task of casting.

Cindy Tolan – who led casting – says, "Steven said to me the only way we're going to make this film is if we can cast it appropriately, and he and Kristie gave me everything I needed to do it properly. I also had an incredible group backing me up, especially my associate Nicholas Petrovich, who worked very closely with me."

Auditions got underway in January 2018, a full year before filming began.

"I felt my mandate was pretty clear, that all of the Sharks, María, Anita, Bernardo and Chino – everyone needed to be Latinx," Tolan says. "And they also had to be triple threats, meaning they needed to be able to sing, dance and act. A quadruple threat, really, because there was a fourth dimension: the camera had to love them."

Tolan says, "We literally undertook a world-wide search for all of them. We cast our net as far away as Australia, but we targeted four main areas in addition to New York: Florida, California, Puerto Rico and the Latin American countries."

Tolan and her crew sent out flyers for an open call in each region, set up satellite casting offices in various locations and used social media to spread the word far and wide. Eight of the actors playing Sharks were found at San Juan casting calls, and in total 20 members of the cast – including Moreno – are Puerto Rican or of Puerto Rican descent.

Spielberg and Macosko Krieger were also deeply involved and offered guidance throughout. According to Tolan, the director was very clear about authenticity, not only for ethnicity but also in terms of youth.

"He wanted to consider real teenagers. In the case of Patrick Higgins, who plays Baby John, Talia Ryder, who plays a Shark girl, and Juliette Feliciano, who lives in Puerto Rico and plays a Shark girl – all were still in high school and took time off from school for the film."

The Broadway community also provided a rich source of talent for the ensemble; many of the Jets and Sharks had worked on Broadway previously with Justin Peck and other elite choreographers.

Casting the principal roles proceeded simultaneously; in the end, the painstaking casting process took the full year and was the largest casting search Spielberg has ever undertaken, with the exception of "Schindler's List." "West Side Story" marks the film debuts of over 50 young performers.

TONY

"It was a no-brainer in terms of wanting to do the role," Ansel Elgort says. Elgort had previously starred in such films as "The Goldfinch," "Baby Driver" (for which he received a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Actor) and "The Fault in Our Stars."

"I just had to earn it. I was in the middle of another movie when I started auditioning, but I knew I wanted it so badly that I had to begin auditioning.

"I kept sending in tapes, working with my vocal coach and re-taping and re-taping to get better and better, and finally I landed a screen test. But I still didn't get the role. I continued to work – studying with an opera coach and sending in tapes – and finally it came through."

"Tony's a tricky character," Spielberg says. "He needs to be a tough gutter rat, but then look at what he sings: He has to be someone really capable of love and unashamed to wear his heart on his sleeve. We looked for a year for Tony, then Ansel came in. Sometimes on camera he looks even younger than he is, then in the next second he looks like Marlon Brando. He has great power, and also vulnerability. He is boy and man and so facile at how often these qualities are interchangeable. Ansel found a way to create a Tony who's emerging from the shadows, struggling hard to find the light, which is his natural element – which makes what happens to him all the more devastating."

MARÍA

"Rachel Zegler, a Latina of Colombian descent, was among the first group of potential Marías we looked at," Tolan recalls. "I just knew Steven was going to respond to her. It was clear she was right for the role, but it took a year to make sure she was absolutely the right person."

For Rachel Zegler, who was in her senior term in high school in New Jersey, it was a very long year.

"A friend from California sent me the casting notice Cindy sent out. I remember the night, January 25, 2018. I made a tape singing 'I Feel Pretty' in Spanish and sent it in," Zegler says. "Two weeks later they asked me to send in another tape singing 'Somewhere' and reading some lines from Tony Kushner's incredible script. Then Cindy asked me to come into her office, but it wasn't until March that my mom got a call from Cindy's office saying Steven wanted to meet me."

It was just the beginning of a very long process that included being called back for a screen test.

"It wasn't long after that I met Ansel, and we did a scene together. It was obvious to me that when Ansel came in for his screen test, he knew who he was portraying. It was amazing for me to watch someone who knows himself so well play someone else. I like to think I know María, and I like to think she and Tony fell in love."

Six more months, however, went by before Zegler was cast.

"I waited and waited and started to lose hope. But at the end of the year, I got a call from Cindy who asked me to come in once more, and I read again with Ansel. It was like seeing an old friend, and I spent the whole day with Steven and him. It was a very chill, calm environment.

"I remember then that they asked Ansel to leave the room, and they called in my mom, and I thought that was weird. Everyone was standing in a semicircle, and Steven walked up to me and said, 'I want to let you know you've gotten the part of María.' I remember shouting an obscenity and falling into his arms. And he gave me a big hug.

"And then the real work started!"

"Rachel is extraordinary," Spielberg says. "Rachel walked on to this huge set, never having made a movie before, surrounded by a bunch of fairly formidable people and superbly talented actors with much more experience than her. She watched, she listened, she learned at a jaw-dropping rate, but she also brought with her that mysterious quality of having been born to do what she's doing. Her María is a revelation."

ANITA AND BERNARDO

The casting of Anita and Bernardo was equally momentous.

Tolan says, "These were roles we searched for on and on – a long process. We were struggling to find the right Bernardo to fulfill the role that Steven envisioned, with people who could sing, dance and act."

In this film Bernardo is a prize fighter, on the verge of a promising boxing career. He's also tremendously intelligent, but rigid in his beliefs.

"I just had one of those moments where I thought of the young men who played 'Billy Elliot' in their teens," Tolan says, referring to the Broadway musical. "We'd seen a couple of them for various roles, and I remembered that there were three original Billys. One of them was David Alvarez.

"David was completely off-the-grid as a performer. He had left New York to pursue other interests, had been in the Army and attended college. I thought, 'Let's track him down.' We blasted his inbox through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, what have you. It took him two weeks to respond with a self-audition tape.

"You never want to do this in casting, but after I looked at the tape I said to Steven and Kristie, 'I think I found Bernardo.' They watched the tape, and they were agog, like, 'Yes, this is Bernardo.'"

Alvarez says, "I sent the tape in expecting nothing, but the next day I got a call from Cindy Tolan saying Steven Spielberg loved it. And that he wanted to see me. I went into that room to meet him very nervous telling myself, 'Just be yourself.' And he told me at the end of the meeting he liked what I did, but he wanted me to come again but to shave my beard. Which I did.

"But I didn't hear anything until he finally called me. I called him 'Mr. Spielberg' on the phone, wanting to be respectful and polite. He said, 'Call me Steven because I'm going to be calling you Bernardo.' After that I was so excited. I couldn't wait to start digging into the role."

"David is unique. I wanted a realistic Bernardo, not a stereotype. He's incredible," Spielberg says.

Ariana DeBose – who plays Anita – was at first reluctant to come in.

"I remember thinking that this is definitely not a role for me," DeBose says. "But Cindy Tolan had a conversation with my agent, and they persuaded me, though it took a while. They kept calling me back. I thought, 'Why? I'm definitely not getting this role.'

"My father is Puerto Rican; my mom is white. I was raised by my mom as a single parent in North Carolina and spent a lot of time growing up in a dance studio with a lot of Puerto Ricans. But I didn't speak Spanish fluently and didn't feel part of the community. I felt I was a little bit of everything."

"One of the gifts this movie has brought me is the acceptance of who I am, as well as a sense of being accepted by the Latin community, the Hispanic community, and even by the Puerto Rican community," DeBose says. "It's something I never really thought I was going to find.

"I remember telling Steven at one of the callbacks who I thought Anita is. Like she knows her own mind. She's strong, she's fiery. But she deeply loves life. She's the life of the party but also a peacemaker. She knows it's been hard to come as far as she has. The road from Puerto Rico to New York for her was very tumultuous. So, she wears that, but it does not cover everything that she is."

Spielberg enthuses about Ariana, and her insight into her character.

"Ariana had the difficult task of finding her own version of Anita, who had been incarnated so magnificently in the first film by Rita, who was going to be on set in a new role. It was mind-blowing, watching the two of them together, talking, discussing, laughing. Rita embraced Ariana's performance, and Ariana made it clear how inspired she was by Rita. And Ariana is a great actress, a great singer and dancer – it's a cliché but she really lights up the whole screen, and when the story gets tragic, she breaks our hearts."

DeBose recalls, "When Rita first came to rehearsals, she looked around the studio and asked, 'Who's the girl playing Anita?' I stood up and waved awkwardly, and she goes, 'You and I got some talking to do.' I felt very awkward and embarrassed. Later I told her I was terrified, and she said, 'Yes, honey, it's a lot.' We had a lovely lunch together and talked woman to woman."

"Ariana is wonderful," Moreno says. "And she's a fierce dancer, a much better dancer than I ever was. I think she's absolutely right for the part."

"I grew up watching the film, and I just fell in love with the woman in the purple dress. Even before I really understood what the story was about, I knew that I loved what she was doing. As I grew

up, I discovered who she was and that her name was Rita Moreno, and she looked like me. She was one of the first women onscreen that actually had skin color that was close to mine – especially in a film made at that time, where there weren't many women of color on the screen. That was very influential on me during my childhood."

"When Ariana auditioned, we asked her to sing some of 'America,'" says Tony Kushner. "When she got to the lines 'And the babies crying, / And the bullets flying,' there were tears in her eyes, she got the horror of what she was singing, and she made us see it. She's a great dramatic actress. She does nothing for effect – her power comes from the truth."

RIFF

The role of Riff, the leader of the Jets, rounds out the principal cast.

"Mike Faist – who plays Riff – is another amazingly gifted actor," Tolan says. "He was nominated for a Tony Award® for 'Dear Evan Hansen.' We brought him in for the Jets, and we kept bringing him back. I must say he rose to the top very, very quickly. Everyone was at his call back – Steven, Tony, Justin, Jeanine and Kristie. And they all said, 'Let's try him for Riff.' And he grabbed the part."

"Mike Faist is one-of-a-kind," Spielberg says. "He can do absolutely anything."

As she worked, Tolan kept Spielberg's mandate in the forefront of her mind. "In keeping with the quest for authenticity, Steven wanted only to consider people who are appropriate in today's times for every role."

Faist recalls, "I first auditioned for 'West Side Story' in February 2018; I actually auditioned originally for Tony. I didn't hear anything back. They asked if I would come back in for Riff. November 2018 is when it solidified. I'm primarily an actor. But I grew up taking dance classes and voice lessons. This is my first big movie, and when I first sat down with Steven, I told him the movies I grew up watching were 'Singin' in the Rain,' 'West Side Story' and 'Indiana Jones.' I told him, jokingly, I was bred and groomed to do this with him."

ANYBODYS

"Anybodys, the tomboy and hanger-on who longs to be a Jet, was a case in point," Tolan says. "We had a lot of conversations about it and decided this role could be played best by a trans person."

Tolan recalls, "iris menas came in for a dance call, and when we introduced Hir to Steven, iris said, 'We met before when you came backstage at 'Jagged Little Pill.'' iris was in the cast. Somehow we saw then and there that iris were meant to be in the film."

It was a choice Arthur Laurents would have approved of wholeheartedly.

"Arthur was ahead of his time with this," says David Saint. "He said, 'Anybodys is a character who was a man born in a female's body.' End of story. If it were today, he would be a transgender."

"Anybodys is trying to find his way," iris says. "He's kind of been disowned by his family. He's looking for a home on the streets and is following the Jets closely. We see this lost soul trying to join this gang of 'brothers.'"

ADDITIONAL ROLES

Rounding out the cast are Broadway star Brian d'Arcy James ("Spotlight," "Something Rotten," "The Ferryman") as Officer Krupke; the respected stage and screen actor Corey Stoll ("Homeland," "The Seagull," "Macbeth") as Lieutenant Schrank; Josh Andrés Rivera ("In the Heights," "Hamilton") as Chino; Ana Isabelle ("Dementia 13," "Seasons of Love") as Rosalía; and Paloma Garcia-Lee ("On the Town," "Moulin Rouge") as Graziella.

Spielberg assembled a youthful cast of Sharks and Jets – diverse, brimming with energy and amazingly talented. All are trained dancers – many with Broadway and ballet backgrounds – a few still live in Puerto Rico, and one or two have little or no professional experience and are at the beginning of what promises to be sterling careers.

The Sharks are David Avilés Morales (Aníbal), Sebastian Serra (Braulio), Ricardo A. Zayas (Chago), Carlos E. Gonzalez (Chucho), Ricky Ubeda (Flaco), Andrei Chagas (Jochi), Adriel Flete (Julito), Jacob Guzman (Junior), Kelvin Delgado (Manolo), Carlos Sánchez Falú (Pipo), Julius Anthony Rubio (Quique), Yurel Echezarreta (Sebas) and David Guzman (Tino).

The Shark Girls are Tanairi Sade Vazquez (Charita), Yesenia Ayala (Clary), Gabriela M. Soto (Conchi), Juliette Feliciano (Cuca), Jeanette Delgado (Ili), Maria Alexis Rodriguez (Isa), Edriz E. Rosa Pérez (Jacinta), Ilda Mason (Luz), Jennifer Florentino (Montse), Melody Martí (Pili), Gaby Diaz (Tati) and Isabella Ward (Tere).

The Jets are played by Sean Harrison Jones (Action), Jess LeProtto (A-Rab), Patrick Higgins (Baby John), Kyle Allen (Balkan), John Michael Fiumara (Big Deal), Kevin Csolak (Diesel), Kyle Coffman (Ice), Daniel Patrick Russell (Little Moly), Ben Cook (Mouthpiece), Harrison Coll (Numbers), Garett Hawe (Skink), Myles Erlick (Snowboy) and Julian Elia (Tiger).

The Jet Girls are Eloise Kropp (Dot), Leigh-Ann Esty (Gussie), Lauren Leach (Karen), Brittany Pollack (Mack), Kellie Drobnick (Mamie), Skye Mattox (Maxie), Adriana Pierce (Natalie), Jonalyn Saxer (Rhonda), Brianna Abruzzo (Sorella), Halli Toland (Sweden), Sara Esty (Tat), Talia Ryder (Tessa) and Maddie Ziegler (Velma).

Steven Spielberg says, "We've done something none of the other productions have ever accomplished. We have a completely, one hundred percent Latinx cast of Sharks, men and women.

There's no one who's not Latinx. This was non-negotiable for us, and it's one of the reasons it took us a year to cast. It would have been impossible, as well as unthinkable, for us to make a film of 'West Side Story' without doing our best to gather a truly diverse cast and crew, and in countless ways, the diversity of the people who made this production gave it its form and substance."

"They brought an authenticity," he continues. "They brought themselves, and everything they believe and everything about them – they brought that to the work. And there was so much interaction between the cast wanting to be able to commit to the Puerto Rican experience. They all represent, I think, a diversity, both within the Puerto Rican, Nuyorican community as well as the broader Latinx community. And they took that seriously.

Adds Spielberg, "We worked very hard to find the greatest ensemble imaginable, and with our genius casting lead, Cindy Tolan, we really did that. What we didn't know – you never know till the filming starts – is that we'd also assembled a cast that was phenomenally dedicated to the work. They were tireless, unstoppable. And I feel that all of their glorious work, souls and talents are splendidly in evidence in the film."

THE CREATORS' ESTATES

During this extraordinarily long pre-production period, Spielberg and Macosko Krieger continued to consult with the estates of the original creators and welcomed their input as part of production. This included the Leonard Bernstein Estate which includes the composer's three children, Jamie, Alexander and Nina Simmons; the aforementioned David Saint, Arthur Laurents' longtime associate who represents his estate; and the Jerome Robbins Estate. The filmmakers reached out, as well, to the legendary composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, and he gave his full support to the new version.

"Steven loves the piece so much. I think he must be passionate about most of the movies he does, but he's certainly passionate about this one," says Sondheim. "It's terrific. And for those who know the show, there are going to be some real surprises in it because Tony Kushner, who wrote the screenplay, has done some really imaginative and surprising things with the way the songs are used in the story."

"We were so honored that Steven Spielberg was going remake the film with a script by Tony Kushner," said the Bernstein siblings, Alexander and Nina. "We were over the moon and offered whatever support was needed."

For her part, Jamie Bernstein felt that Kushner's screenplay and Spielberg's vision for the film "had deepened everything in the material in an incredibly authentic way."

Ellen Sorrin, one of the Robbins' Estate trustees, echoed these sentiments, remarking that the original material was being lovingly respected by the filmmaking team.

"We were asked to give our blessing to the new film and of course we did because of the people involved, not only Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner, but also Justin Peck," Sorrin says. "I was very, very excited. I've known Justin since he's been at the School of American Ballet and have a great deal of faith in him. I know what a serious artist he is, and I know that he would not do anything that was not respectful of Jerry's legacy."

At this time, Spielberg, McCollum and Macosko Krieger also brought on board additional experts on the Puerto Rican experience in New York City, including Julio Monge, a dancer, actor and director who consulted on the script and more, and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, a Brooklyn College professor who has written 13 books on the subject of Latinos in the U.S.

As a young dancer, Monge worked closely with Jerome Robbins, "The reality of the time when 'West Side Story' first appeared was that there weren't that many Puerto Ricans trained as dancers, singers and actors. And even when I got to New York in the eighties, the demographic was still imbalanced; I was one of two or three Puerto Ricans in 'Jerome Robbins' Broadway,' among a cast of seventy. I got used to that, but then I started seeing a change. It's amazing now to see this new film production of 'West Side Story' and to have so many Puerto Rican performers in it."

Ms. Sánchez Korrol, a Puerto Rican who married a white man outside her community, was first and foremost impressed with what Spielberg and Kushner were trying to do with the film.

"I saw the creators giving the characters personalities based on who they would have been had they actually been living in this place at that time. They gave them depth. Bernardo, for example, in this version is taking on a very intellectual, militant stance as a fully-rounded, authentic creation."

REHEARSALS

"In a way, we were in production on this film for about five months before we started shooting," Spielberg says. "From the tireless work of Kristie Macosko Krieger and also Adam Somner, to the rehearsals, during which I started framing and storyboarding the song and dance numbers; the choreography with Justin Peck; the music; the orchestration; Jeanine Tesori's work getting everybody primed and ready to sing these songs as great as our cast could ever sing them."

Rehearsals for "West Side Story" began on April 15, 2019, eight weeks before the start of filming, primarily at the Gelsey Kirkland Dance Studios in Brooklyn's DUMBO area.

Choreographer Peck had prepared extensively for the extraordinary journey he was undertaking with Spielberg.

In order to immerse himself in the period, Peck says, “I went back and listened to the popular music from 1957 to hear what it sounded like. Though the music has an aesthetic that feels very removed, I had an entirely different reaction when listening to the Bernstein score written around the same time. It sounds modern and timeless, as if it could have been written today.”

Peck says he was also inspired by Jerome Robbins’ choreography for the original show, which also has an ageless feel.

“When I was a student at the School of American Ballet, I watched Jerry’s ballets all the time, and they felt very personal to me. After joining the company at age eighteen or nineteen, the first lead I danced was Bernardo in ‘West Side Story,’ so I know the original choreography inside out.”

But, as Peck points out, “It would have been impossible to use the original choreography for the version of ‘West Side Story’ that Steven and Tony Kushner were creating.” He had to start fresh and needed the right team of experts to join him.

“It was very important for me to put together a team that was not only great in the general sense, but also very much specific to this project. My wife Patricia Delgado was the first person to come aboard. She was a principal dancer at Miami City Ballet, and I have worked with her before in a dancer/choreographer relationship.

“When I first started on the choreography, she came to me and said she would love to work on the project. As a Latin woman, she felt that the story resonated with her, and of course, I was thrilled. Pat was undoubtedly a great asset for the film – helping to ensure that the Latin culture and dance represented in the film is authentic.”

Says Delgado, “I feel very fortunate that my grandparents and parents gave me the energy to follow a career as an artist, but it’s very hard when one doesn’t see their own culture represented on the television, in film or at the theater. For me, the story that Tony Kushner has written, the vision that Steven Spielberg has guided, and also the effort that I have placed in helping Justin give authenticity to the Latin dance – it’s very important to Latin people who want to see our culture represented. To me, it’s been a profound, profound honor.”

Craig Salstein, a former American Ballet Theater soloist, also joined the choreography team.

“Craig’s an amazing dancer,” Peck says. “We worked together on ‘Carousel’ on Broadway, where he went on to become the dance captain. I knew he’d be a terrific asset here.”

Peck discussed the film at length with Spielberg before heading to the studio, and Spielberg also spoke to the Robbins Estate to explain what he and his collaborators were out to accomplish.

"I worked in the studio for two weeks putting together two numbers, 'Cool' and 'America,' both very different from the original – and in the case of 'Cool,' radically different – to show to the people who run the Robbins Estate."

According to Peck, "The people from the Estate watched the rehearsal and after a day or so got back to us saying, 'OK, we trust you to do what you want with this.' That was a great moment. We dove in, and it was full steam ahead."

During the rehearsal period, Spielberg and Peck talked extensively about how to shoot not only the big dance numbers, but all the numbers in the film.

"My approach to creating for the film was to choreograph a number from start to finish," says Peck. "I wanted the performers to experience what it was like to go from beginning to end of a number so they had a sense of through line and the construction of the scene, given that we'd film it in sections and bits and pieces.

"Steven and I would listen to the music and break down how he wanted to shoot each particular section of the numbers. He would draw these sketches envisioning how the camera would capture the movement, and they became a kind of a blueprint on how to shoot.

"There were hilarious moments when I'd be pushing Steven around the studio on a rolling office chair while the cast was performing so he could plan a dolly shot with his iPhone. It was like breaking apart the song and examining the numbers on a cellular level. Pushing him around the studio in the chair was a pinch myself like-this-is-what-life-is-like-now moment."

"You see this incredible director – who's had such an amazing history in the world of film – move around the studio with his camera. We had to get adjusted to seeing dance from side, from behind, from below, from above, more ways than just looking at it dead on, from the perspective of a theatrical audience."

Every morning for the eight weeks of rehearsals, all the Jets and Sharks and principal actors would take ballet class starting with a warm-up at the barre, making sure everyone maintained healthy bodies to tackle this challenging work.

Music rehearsals went hand-in-hand with the work on dancing.

Vocal coach Jeanine Tesori's attention was focused on all the cast, with a particular nod in the direction of Rachel. Their rehearsals were devoted to vocal work of an intense and profound order.

"Rachel came to us with a beautiful voice, and I have watched her train so hard, watched her learn and learn and create and become more skilled," Tesori says. "She has only been on the planet for 18 years, and she brings an openness and freshness. We worked and worked, and she has emerged as a young artist coming of age.

"And the first time I heard Ansel, I thought, 'Wow, he can really sing.' And he is a deeply good actor, and deeply musical. And he worked his butt off all year in terms of vocal training."

Elgort says, "Jeanine is so great, not only with music, but with the words and what you're trying to communicate; she's almost like a director or acting coach. She wants to make sure we get to the heart of the lyrics in the songs."

"The marvelous thing about working with Rachel and Ansel is that they were able to work with a complete innocence about that material," Tesori says, "approaching it as if it were new, which is so difficult when you think of how well-known it is."

As rehearsals moved forward, and the date of production approached, music and vocal recordings took place concurrently with dance rehearsals during May and early June in New York and Los Angeles under the supervision of maestro Gustavo Dudamel, David Newman, music supervisor Matt Sullivan and Ms. Tesori.

"It was really wonderful having Stephen Sondheim in the vocal booth when we were recording," Tesori says. "You felt the spirit of the original show was right there with us, blessing what we were doing."

"Stephen Sondheim is a genius – a word I use very rarely," Tony Kushner says. "Some of the lyrics for 'West Side Story' have the brilliant rhyming and wordplay we associate with him, but some of them are simple. Every song in 'West Side Story' yields dramatic richness. None is static, each is a beautifully structured progression, each develops the characters, their relationships to each other and to language and class and history, each advances narrative and meaning."

Spielberg says, "Prerecording the music was practically a first for me. I remember on 'Close Encounters' we prerecorded the musical dialogue with the mothership a few times because that was part of a scene, but most of the time I'm just making the movie, and then I give it to John Williams, he goes off, writes the score, and then we spend about ten days in the recording studio when the film is all cut together. But this being a musical, it's a completely different approach.

He continues, "The recording sessions on West 34th Street were a blast. I got to spend a great deal of time with Steve Sondheim and the Bernstein siblings while we worked through the score. And maybe the biggest thrill of all was having Gustavo Dudamel conduct. It was John Williams' idea for me to ask Gustavo to conduct the entire score, and it was one of John's many master strokes! Gustavo led the orchestra onto the movie screen with such insight, heart and dynamism, and his astounding musicianship."

Educating the cast about the history of New York in 1957 was also a crucial aspect of the rehearsal period, which included two historical panel discussions. Moderated by producer Kevin

McCollum, the panels consisted of people who grew up in Lincoln Square and San Juan Hill at the time during which the film is set and have first-hand knowledge of the neighborhood.

Virginia Sánchez Korrol talked at length to the cast about Puerto Rican history, including the mass migration to the U.S. after World War II, when the island territory was becoming industrialized.

"There simply weren't enough jobs there because industrialization required skills they didn't have," Sánchez Korrol explained. "People began to leave – the oldest son or daughter – to go to New York to earn a living and enough money to send back home."

This is the atmosphere in which the Sharks existed and the struggles they endured once they arrived in New York. But she also talked about the plight of the descendants of the earlier migrant and immigrant populations and how Robert Moses and the urban renewal program destroyed the neighborhood of the Jets, resulting in conflicts that grew up between the two communities.

A lively Q&A session with the cast followed, the performers peppering Sánchez Korrol and the other panel members with thoughtful, probing questions in order to better understand their characters.

PRODUCTION

"I knew that if I was going to tell this story again it had to be as much as possible on the real streets of New York," Spielberg says.

"New York City is another character in 'West Side Story,'" says Macosko Krieger. "It was essential to all of us that we capture its energy on film, simply because the narrative is so connected to the history of the communities living in the neighborhood at the time. While I knew filming on the streets of New York would present a logistical challenge, we did all we could to bring that element as we organized the production."

Filming began on "West Side Story" with a pre-shoot on Friday night, June 7, 2019, in the railroad train yards alongside Brooklyn's Bush Terminal with scenes depicting the Jets and the Sharks approaching the site of the rumble, each gang vocalizing a section of the "Quintet."

Official production got under way after the weekend break on Monday, June 10, at Steiner Studios, kicking off with a scene featuring Tony and Riff in Doc's Drug Store basement before returning to Bush Terminal where Spielberg began shooting the musical number "Cool" over a five-day period. A brief return to Steiner followed, during which the director filmed Tony and María getting to know each other out of sight behind the gym bleachers after having locked eyes on the gym floor during the "Dance at the Gym."

This was followed by a move to an abandoned subway stop off New York's Bowery, substituting for the 72nd Street subway station where Tony and María meet to head uptown for their date at Manhattan's Met Cloisters. Moving to the Cloisters Museum itself and then to the Church of the Intersession on West 155th Street, Spielberg staged the couple exchanging vows and singing "One Hand, One Heart" inside the church's chapel.

Next, production traveled to a rundown bar in Red Hook, Brooklyn for a scene in which Riff buys a gun to protect himself at the upcoming rumble the Jets and the Sharks have arranged in a "war council." A unit move to the far side of Brooklyn to Marine Park's St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School gymnasium followed for the all-important "Dance at the Gym" sequence, which features almost the entire cast of the film.

Reflecting on these early days of filming, choreographer Justin Peck says, "'Cool' especially was a challenging, very ambitious undertaking."

Peck points out that his choreography for the "Cool" dance differs significantly from Robbins' original in that rather than being a straight dance piece, the number now depicts a confrontation between Tony and Riff over a gun Riff has purchased.

"In the original film the scene takes place in a parking garage," says production designer Adam Stockhausen. "Here we're in a different situation entirely, atop piers at the very western edge of the city. Tony Kushner's idea was that they could almost be in the Old West. And the number has a different dramatic function from the original now having to do with a life and death issue about whether it's wise to have the weapon.

"The scene is completely reimagined," Ansel Elgort says. "The stakes are much higher here. The amazing music, the dance that Justin has choreographed, the crumbling sets and blustery weather added to it."

Spielberg says, "A number like 'Cool' was intimidating, but Justin Peck gave me the kind of confidence I needed during rehearsals. He is not only collaborative but original and uniquely inventive. He has no fear. When people see what Justin has done, they will see his art. I saw it on set, but when you see it cut together, it's an entirely different experience – 'Cool' is one of the most original numbers I have seen in any musical."

The "Dance at the Gym" that followed, a dance and dialogue sequence exploding with energy, proved a colorful, high-spirited contrast to "Cool."

"We looked at so many gyms for the scene and had a lot of difficulty finding a fit to our exact requirements," Stockhausen says. "We had so many dancers to fill the space, and equipment, and we needed a stage for the band, and proper entrances for the Sharks to come into the scene, because the Sharks entrance into the gym is a big event. Most of the sites we saw were too small and didn't work.

"Not to mention, we needed bleachers to carry out Steven and Tony's vision that María and Tony would retreat behind the bleachers to get to know each other after first meeting on the gym floor. St. Thomas Aquinas' gym fit the bill."

Peck says, "The 'Dance at the Gym' was the probably the largest number we tackled. With more than sixty dancers and over 150 extras, so many people, complicated choreography and a lot of moving parts, it took time to capture.

"For example, the opening shot that Steven and Janusz designed was almost a minute long. A spider camera enters through the doors, rises up and wraps around, then looks down over the Jets as they're dancing, pivots around Riff and Graziella (his girlfriend), comes down to the ground, introduces Anybodys, tracks back around to the Jets as two Jets dance and Anybodys cuts in and finally we come to Bernardo having entered as he looks out over the gym. Amazing."

Says Kaminski, "In that first screen version of 'West Side Story,' the choreography was beautiful, but it doesn't feel entirely motivated by the camera – or camera moves. We needed to do something different without reinventing the genre. So, we still have people dancing, people singing and performing in very beautiful, colorful costumes. Yet, from the standpoint of cinematography, it has a modern interpretation, and the modern aspect comes from how active the camera is. Today, the equipment is lighter; it allows us to move with the actors, which was much more challenging back in the late fifties, early sixties."

In addition to Peck's choreography, a big factor in the scene was Paul Tazewell's costumes, an array of beautiful, vibrant, colorful outfits that contributed their own excitement to the number, as well as reflecting on the characters who wear the clothes.

Tazewell says, "It was important for Steven that the film have an ultra-realistic look but still honor the fact that it's a musical. When you have the element of the music that's been in my life, everyone's life, for so many years, its lyricism and beauty and excitement allow for all the elements to be pushed in a way that resonate with emotion. And that could be reflected in the costumes.

"My color choice for the Jets, boys and girls, tended towards the cool, blues and greens, teals and grays, especially against the vast arrange of concrete buildings, sidewalks and streets, but also at the gym. For the Hispanic community, reflective of the island they're coming from, we have a warmer tone, golds, red and rust, orange – so there's warmth and vitality and an optimism in their palette."

"We wanted to differentiate between the Jets' and the Sharks' costumes in several ways," Spielberg says. "Our Jets are really street rats – drop-outs, unemployed, scavengers – as Lieutenant Schrank identifies them, they're the grandchildren of European immigrants who mostly moved up and moved out – except for the parents of the Jets. The Sharks in our version are young Puerto Rican guys, many of them recent arrivals to New York, who've bonded together to protect their neighborhood from

the nativist vandalism of groups like the Jets. They have jobs – probably each one holds a number of jobs – and they're trying to make it in the city. For the most part, the Jets dress more drably than the Sharks. We didn't want the kids on either side dressed uniformly – Paul Tazewell is extraordinary with details that give every single costume its individual character and history. The only time we decided to get a bit schematic is at the dance in the gym. Since the number is about cultural differences and about synthesizing, I wanted to be sure you can easily keep track of the Jets, who are in blues and greens, and the Sharks, in reds and oranges. When the gangs segregate, there's a bold, startling rift on the dance floor. When those lines start to blur, the whole gym becomes a kind of rainbow."

Says Tazewell, "Steven wanted the traditional white dress for María at the dance, the first time Tony sees her. For Anita, I chose to go with black for the scene because I didn't want it to resemble any of the other productions I'd seen. I designed a strong silhouette for the dress but also red petticoat, so we see the internal fire going on within her."

The choreography for the "Dance at the Gym" scene is demanding, propulsive and rambunctious, the two gangs and their leaders trying to outdo each one another with their moves, all to a pulsating Mambo rhythm that builds and builds.

"We tried to put some storytelling into the scene, so there are character introductions and a display of tension between the Sharks and the Jets as they compete for space to dance within the gym," Peck says. "And in the midst of it all, we start to notice Tony and María locking eyes."

With the "Dance at the Gym" sequence complete, the unit moved to another Brooklyn location, the Grace Reformed Church in the borough's Flatbush neighborhood, where Stockhausen had created the police precinct set for one of the musical's best-known numbers, "Gee, Officer Krupke."

"Krupke" differed in scale from the "Dance at the Gym" in that it was staged in the confines of a small space, performed by only seven Jets: Jess LeProtto (A-Rab), Patrick Higgins (Baby John), Kevin Csolak (Diesel), Kyle Allen (Balkin), Ben Cook (Mouthpiece), John Michael Fiumara (Big Deal) and Myles Erlick (Snowboy).

"It was a tight location," Peck says. "Steven had the idea of filming it with a minimal number of shots. Every move, every transition had to be air-tight and densely constructed so that the cast could just land, click into position, and flow into the next verse. It's so immaculate in its construction and performance by the Jets. Each of them was so great to work with on this number."

Says Kaminski, "On many occasions, I felt like I was inside the musical. It was like a 3-D Broadway show experience and a privilege to be part of it that way. 'Krupke' is a good example of this, because it was very physical; it's got all the 'gags' of Broadway. And it was very easy to work with the dancers because you knew they would hit their marks. Lighting on a given scene is very specific, and you always have certain marks for actors to hit, but you often have to allow them a certain freedom. There's

no such worry with dancers, because their movements already have to be extremely precise and coordinated. They have great discipline."

Following this more or less rollicking, comical song, the unit traveled to Washington Heights in Manhattan. There, Spielberg filmed a love-struck Tony searching for María's tenement apartment building in San Juan Hill after the dance, singing his heart out about 'María' as he roams the neighborhood's streets and back alleys trying to find her home.

Next on the agenda, production set up in Harlem and Hamilton Heights, where scenes depicting the Jets in "The Prologue" were followed by one of the film's most ambitious musical and dance numbers for the Sharks, the rousing and uplifting "America."

Spielberg, Kushner and Peck had completely reconceived "America" for the film. Unlike the original, it is set in the daytime as opposed to the night and unfolds not on a rooftop but throughout San Juan Hill's streets.

Says Peck, "We wanted to show the neighborhood that Anita and Bernardo are a part of – the shops, the vendors, the street life, even protest marches – to show how the Puerto Ricans interact with their neighbors, their friends, the shopkeepers. And we wanted to build a sense of community and energy in the number. It culminates into this massive intersection where the entire neighborhood spills out into the street for a block party, a *Pachanga* [a Caribbean dance style with origins in Cuba]. It's a big glamourous moment of dance for Bernardo and Anita. And it took more than ten days to film, not necessarily consecutive days."

Much of the challenge of "America" involved not only Peck's demanding choreography and the far-flung locations across Harlem, Hamilton Heights, Ridgewood, Queens and Paterson, New Jersey, but also the steamy New York summer weather. Most days during which the number was being filmed, the temperature soared to 90 degrees and higher, with humidity to match, the dancers performing full-out all-day long, and the crew grappling with the elements.

Spielberg says, "'America' is a joyful, funny and sexy song, but at its heart it's a debate between two groups of Puerto Ricans: those who, like Anita, feel that they've found in New York a great place to realize their dreams, and those like Bernardo who are disillusioned by the racism and barriers to economic advancement they encounter every day. The creators of 'West Side Story' were obviously aware of and sympathetic to this fierce division – as the children and grandchildren of Jewish immigrants, they certainly recognized a tormented relationship with both the old country and the new world."

Following "America," Spielberg shot another section of the film's Prologue over several days on 134th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam avenues in a rubble-strewn backlot. The scene – in dance, song and dialogue – depicts the initial hostile encounter in the film between the Jets and the

Sharks, illustrating their long-running mutual antagonism. We're introduced to several Jets and Sharks, as well as to Baby John (Patrick Higgins), the youngest member of the Jets.

Baby John, pursued by the Sharks in "The Prologue," hurls himself up and over a fence, only to be surrounded by three Sharks who pierce his ear with a rusty nail.

The second section of the sequence had to do with the police converging onto the back lot to stop the squabbling between the gangs, men in blue shouting invective at both groups.

In a significant change from the original material, after the police have departed, the Sharks, in a symbolic effort to claim their turf, defiantly sing out the revolutionary words to "La Borinqueña" a Puerto Rican anthem, an expression of Bernardo's militant stance against discrimination. It's completely unexpected.

Professor Sánchez Korrol explains, "'La Borinqueña' was written in the 19th century, a song for one of the first major uprisings for Puerto Rican independence in 1868. The song was outlawed at the time, and the Puerto Rican flag was banned. That Bernardo and the Sharks should know and sing the song is a testament to their Puerto Rican nationalist fervor."

This sequence completed, the unit relocated to Brooklyn's Navy Yard to film the climactic rumble, the fatal confrontation between the two gangs that results in tragedy.

"Rather than have the rumble take place underneath the West Side Highway, Steven and Tony had the idea for it take place in a sanitation department salt shed near the highway off-ramp where road salt is stored in summer for use on the roads in winter," says Adam Stockhausen. "We actually found a huge warehouse space near Steiner Studio's grounds, inside the Navy Yard, a vast galvanized metal box that was un-insulated and felt raw and open.

"The space also fulfilled another requirement Steven insisted on – high windows. He wanted to feel the presence of the highway and the cars going by; to have that repetitive light element visible through the windows be a constant feature of the lighting."

Inside the vast space, Stockhausen assembled giant mounds of salt. Outside, cinematographer Kaminski created an elaborate lighting rig involving klieg lights mounted on super-size cranes. The effect created the impression of cars passing on the West Side Highway off-ramp outside the building, running lights, headlights and brake lights shining at intervals in the scene through the warehouse's high windows as the scene progressed.

"You never actually see vehicles; you just see the lights. It's probably one of the most imaginative lighting setups ever created," Stockhausen marvels.

The rumble between the Jets and Sharks – led by Riff and Bernardo – was one of the most intense and dramatic sequences of the shoot. Stunt coordinator Mark Fichera worked closely with Spielberg, Peck and the rest of the cast to deliver a heightened sense of danger and reality in the scene.

"We wanted to make sure that this was not the dance fighting you saw in the original film. These guys are out for blood," Fichera says. "The Sharks hang out at the boxing gym, they're a bit more technical in their fighting. The Jets are street brawlers."

"For 'The Rumble,' we're using some of Robbins' moves – like when they open their arms to go on the attack, that is pure Robbins," Spielberg says. "But then it goes into Justin Peck's own interpretation of it after that. The fight itself is not a dance – it's real, it's realistic.

"The Rumble" completed, the unit now took up residence across the Hudson River in New Jersey. First stop was the city of Paterson for more than two weeks for scenes portraying the Puerto Rican neighborhood of San Juan Hill as well as sections of the "Jet Song," and then several days in Newark where Adam Stockhausen recreated a floor of the Gimbels department store, the famous Herald Square emporium located just across from its longtime rival Macys. María and her friends are part of the Gimbels nighttime cleaning crew.

As Stockhausen recalls it, "Steven's very first direction to me was to get the film outside and make it real. 'Let's shoot the film on the streets so we feel the life of San Juan Hill and Lincoln Square and the characters,' he told me. That's a pretty tall order given what New York City looks like right now. Somehow, we managed to find locations in Brooklyn and Upper Manhattan that worked beautifully for our objectives. But we knew we also had to look elsewhere."

Paterson appealed to the filmmakers on several levels; as opposed to New York City, which had undergone tremendous change since the 1950s, the buildings in Paterson maintained an accurate look from the time period and could be filmed from various angles. The city also boasted a wealth of old factories and warehouses suited to the filmmakers' vision.

Sections of the "Jet Song" were also filmed within the vast acreage of rubble, dirt and debris the filmmakers created in Paterson, which was shot with a sweeping camera move that captures the song in all its excitement.

Moving on from Paterson to nearby Newark, New Jersey, Spielberg filmed the lovestruck María and her friends singing "I Feel Pretty" in a recreated floor of Gimbels.

Tony Kushner says, "In the original stage version, 'I Feel Pretty' was the opening song at the top of Act Two, after the intermission that follows the rumble that ends Act One. In other words, when María sang 'I Feel Pretty,' the audience knew that María's life is over, that the man she loves has murdered her brother.

"Sondheim doesn't like his lyrics for 'I Feel Pretty.' He's often disparaged the line 'I feel pretty and witty and bright,' saying that it sounds more like Noel Coward than a Puerto Rican teenager in 1957. I wondered where a Puerto Rican teenager might have picked up this frothy Anglo palaver and why she'd want to make light-hearted use of it. I'd been considering changing María's place of employment from a

bridal shop to something less romantic and more reflective of the kind of employment opportunities available to her – for instance, a late-night cleaning crew at a large department store, in which she would be surrounded by displays and placards promoting the style of the era: chic, sophisticated, pretty and witty and bright. María resents the witty, pretty people she has to clean up after, but she also envies their relative wealth and comfort, and like all of us, she's susceptible to conventions of glamour and romance. I think the song works beautifully as something simultaneously parodic and playfully participatory. And the cleaning crew gave us a way to increase the number of women singing the song, from three to eight, which makes it bigger and more joyful and inclusive."

For Rachel Zegler the sequence was a highlight of filming.

"The song is almost a pure dance," she says. "The choreography contains the natural movement of a young woman in love as she abandons her cleaning chores and runs around the store trying on clothes and accessories and checking her image out in the mirror. Marvelous.

"Steven is an artist, and he has such a clear vision. What is so gratifying is to see his vision change as he works and is inspired on set. He'll often let us experiment with our own ideas and with different ways of filming. He's very open to collaborating with us and having a conversation, rather than just telling us what to do.

"In 'I Feel Pretty,' he showed us ahead of time how he was going to film the song, but then when he got to set, he saw another way to do the scene, so we changed the direction. It was so fresh, exciting and immediate. And you know you're in the hands of a great master and that gives you such pleasure and confidence."

The thrill of working with Spielberg was an element that sustained the cast more and more as filming went along.

Elgort says, "I think Steven just wants everyone to have a good time, including himself. And even on days when it would be emotional and heavy, I'd remember what he said at the outset, that we should always try to have fun. 'We're making a movie. So let's make it fun.'

"And when the energy on set is positive and everyone is excited, that boosts everyone's spirits, and Steven wants to nurture that. He'll always let you see what you've just shot on the monitor after a take so the momentum builds as we push into the next shot. Everyone is very happy on this set and having the time of their lives, which is incredibly refreshing."

According to Mike Faist, "Every day Steven would show up to set with an openness that would allow everyone to be okay with uncertainty and figuring it out as we learn along the way. In my opinion, he is the perfect artist because he remains a student. He remains curious, as a guy who just loves what he does and chooses to do that in its purest form."

DeBose was as enthusiastic as her colleagues, “Steven’s an actor’s director; someone capable of sublime artistry who’s had the most extraordinary success but has remained as kind and giving as he is. He’s still got this childlike energy about him, and an intense imagination, these qualities being the most important you can maintain as an actor. He embodies that quality, and he leads by example.”

Tony Kushner says, “Steven is an artist, first and foremost. Everything he makes comes from a deep personal place, there’s great heart in his work, along with the technical brilliance, there’s an enormous empathic imagination, curiosity about other people’s lives, and an abiding passion for democracy and justice. And he knows what artists know: that he needs to set himself new challenges with every film, he’s always eager to try something new, something difficult, something he’s never done before, something that scares him.”

Returning to New York, the unit set up once again at Steiner Studios to film crucial scenes inside Anita and Bernardo’s apartment, including the musical numbers “A Boy Like That; I Have A Love” inside Doc’s Drug Store for Anita’s dramatic confrontation with the Jets when she arrives looking for Tony; and Valentina’s heartfelt rendition of “Somewhere.”

“‘A Boy Like That’ is a pursuit,” Spielberg says. “Anita aggressively pursues María through the rooms of the apartment they share. ‘A boy like that’ refers to Tony, who killed her brother… ‘Forget that boy and find another.’ María finally defends herself and her love for Tony. She turns around and she starts pursuing Anita into a retreat. The scene is choreographed; it’s not a dance, but it has movement.”

“‘A Boy Like That; I Have A Love’ comes to ‘West Side Story’ from the realm of grand opera,” Kushner says. “It’s vocal cord busting and dramatically demonic. María has to stay in love with a guy who murdered her brother. Anita has to forgive María for loving Tony. That’s a tall order, making us believe love can surmount even obstacles like that. Our two remarkable actresses, under Steven’s direction, singing Sondheim’s words and Bernstein’s music, make you believe in the all-conquering power of love.

“It feels breathtakingly cruel when María sings to Anita ‘You were in love / or so you said.’ Anita’s just lost Bernardo, the love of her life, and María seems to tell this grieving woman that her love is a sham, a pretense. But the severity of this blow is what forces Anita out of the despair engulfing her, it forces her to return to the world of the living, to the very young woman who needs her help. Ariana, Rachel and Steven illuminated this for me. The song changes from the bitterest of fights to a scene between a mother and daughter. It’s unbearably sad, but it’s a stunning moment.”

The singing of “Somewhere” was a special moment for everyone involved.

Kushner recalls, “I asked Steven if we could give ‘Somewhere’ to Valentina. I loved the idea of hearing Rita Moreno sing it. I felt it’d make a powerful connection between the era the musical depicts and the present day, hearing this song of hope and yearning for a better world sung by a woman who’s

been a witness to, and an important participant in, the tormented world we inhabit. It makes us think about where we were as a society when we first head the song, and where we are now. When she sang it at our big table reading, there wasn't a dry eye in the room."

"I think the surprise will be intense for people who know the original movie and the play because 'Somewhere' was used as a ballet in the original production," Rita Moreno says. "I remember seeing it as a ballet, and the singer was deep in a pit, so you couldn't see her. This version couldn't be more different.

"To me, it's almost like a religious song, an extraordinary song, a song of belief and hope, and I am beside myself with happiness that I get to sing it. I considered so many different ways of performing it – as an angry song, at least at the beginning, and to sing the first four lines a cappella with no orchestra. I was hoping against hope that Steven, Tony and Jeanine would agree to do that for me, and they loved the idea."

Tesori says, "The song begins a cappella, which is literally 'in the chapel,' there's no accompaniment. And Valentina finishes the song with great stillness as the orchestra comes in. What Steven has done with the song is so true, so authentic, so heartbreaking."

The intensely dramatic scenes in the drug store were followed by the filming of María and Tony's ecstatic encounter on the fire escape of her tenement building where, frantic to get to know each other, they sing the rapturous duet "Tonight."

The beautiful "Tonight" sequence was filmed at Steiner not on a soundstage but inside a warehouse section of the studio where, in fact, all the sets were built.

Stockhausen explains, "The main characteristic of the warehouse is that it is very tall. That element of height is what Steven wanted, Tony climbing higher and higher up the fire escape singing to María, creating the sense that he is climbing in mid-air.

"It was always the plan to do the bulk of the song on a stage," Stockhausen notes. "We had used a real alley to set up the scene so the audience knew we're outside, but the noise of the city made it unrealistic to film there. Not to mention that there are parts of the city where you can't do playback after 10PM, and this requires us to shoot the full night until dawn."

"The set where we staged 'Tonight,' which is the famous 'Romeo and Juliet' balcony scene, is four stories high, reaching some 40 or 50 feet in the air. It's the perfect setting for such a soaring duet. But the scene will not look theatrical, it will look real; this is street realism and that's how we're filming it," Spielberg points out.

He adds that the music heightens the sense of reality. "In some wonderful way, the music throughout the film plays better in reality, in scenes depicting the real world of the streets and the neighborhood."

The duet concluded after a single setup and several takes of Tony approaching María's fire escape singing a strain of the song "María." Filming wrapped a few moments after midnight, the very first minutes of Saturday morning, September 28, 2019, after 16 weeks of filming.

EPILOGUE

"This is one production I never wanted to see end," Spielberg says. "I had the greatest time making 'West Side Story.' The last time I had a great time making a movie to this level was 'E.T.' in 1981, and that movie certainly put in my head fatherhood and all sorts of things I never contemplated. Maybe this movie put in my head musicals and things I always have contemplated but until this time had never really had the courage to do.

"The message of 'West Side Story' is what is going to live forever. It is even more timely today than it was in 1957, when they mounted the production on Broadway. Even more timely than it was with the film in '61–'62. What it's about is what we are living in this country today – a time of tragic division and distrust, and the waste of human life through violence, racism and xenophobia. And even though the story is a tragedy, like all great tragedies, including 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'West Side Story' suggests that hope can be born amid devastation and despair, and thanks to Bernstein's and Sondheim's score, there's a feeling that despite all the sorrow and ugliness, love transcends. So don't ever give up! That's why I wanted to tell this story right now. It is even more about now than it was about then."

Macosko Krieger says, "Hope, love and community are everywhere in 'West Side Story,' as in life. Despite tragedy, over and over humans continue to break down walls of prejudice and division through love. It is devastating that the racism and hate as depicted in this story are still so relatable 60 years after this show first came to Broadway. But it is important to note that the film ends with musical echoes from 'Somewhere,' and a message of hope. I'll never forget this experience, how much it humbled me, and how it reminded me why I love what I do."

Sondheim says, "The whole thing has real sparkle to it and real energy. And it feels fresh. It's really first rate. And movie musicals are hard to do, and this one – Spielberg and Kushner really, really nailed it."

Spielberg spoke to his cast and crew, and later in a post online, seeming to address the world at-large.

"It's 12:10AM September 28, 2019, at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard in the great city of New York, and we've just concluded filming our version of 'West Side Story.' This has been a journey without precedence: a joyful, stunningly moving, endlessly surprising encounter with the story

and the score of one of the world's greatest musicals. My brilliantly talented, fiercely committed, generous and apparently inexhaustible cast and crew of hundreds have given our film everything they've got, and already I can say that the film owes everything to them, as does its immensely grateful director.

"And while I'm on the subject of gratitude: On every day of the past four years during which we've been preparing, casting, imagining 'West Side Story,' I, and my team, cast and crew have been walking in the footsteps of four giants: Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Laurents, Jerome Robbins and Stephen Sondheim. For the light they'd shed on the world, for Stephen Sondheim's insight, guidance and support, and for the openhearted support of the Bernstein, Laurents and Robbins estates, I owe them more than I can possibly express.

"We've filmed 'West Side Story' all over New York, from Flatbush to Fort Tryon Park. The city lent us its beauty, its energy, and we drew deeply on its grand multicultural, multifaceted spirit. In addition, we spent three extraordinary weeks filming in Paterson, New Jersey. To the people of New York and Paterson, thanks for putting up with our trailers, tents, cranes and mid-street dance sequences; from the bottom on my heart, thanks for the warm welcomes we encountered everywhere, from pedestrians and policeman and neighborhoods and kids. We couldn't have made our musical without you."

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ABOUT THE CAST

ANSEL ELGORT (Tony), a Golden Globe® nominee, has quickly amassed an impressive body of work as both an actor and musician.

Elgort recently wrapped production in Japan on "Tokyo Vice," the upcoming HBO Max drama series executive produced by Michael Mann. Based on Jake Adelstein's nonfiction book, Elgort stars as a young American journalist who embeds himself into the "Tokyo Vice" police squad to reveal corruption. The series chronicles Adelstein's daily descent into the sordid underbelly of Tokyo, where nothing and no one is truly what or who they seem. Elgort also serves as executive producer on the series.

He was recently seen in the Warner Bros. adaptation of the bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Goldfinch." He stars as Theo, whose mother dies in a New York City bombing and ends up entangled in the art world. Elgort also starred in Edgar Wright's action crime thriller "Baby Driver," opposite Jon Hamm, Jamie Foxx and Lily James for which he received a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Actor. The film released in June 2017 and grossed $227 million worldwide, against a production budget of $34 million.

Elgort rose to prominence as the lead of Fox 2000's "The Fault in Our Stars." The film earned him a slew of awards, including a Teen Choice Award for Choice Breakout Star and Choice Movie Actor: Drama, a Young Hollywood Award for Fan Favorite Male Actor and an MTV Movie Award for Movie of the Year.

A graduate of LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts, Elgort starred opposite Alexis Bledel in Matt Charman's play "Regrets," directed by Carolyn Cantor, for Manhattan Theater Club, while finishing up his senior year of high school. His performance received rave reviews, including Bloomberg's "Elgort is a magnetic presence destined perhaps for the multiplex" and The Associated Press' "Elgort radiates the brooding magnetism of James Dean, uplifted by a kind of glinting purity."

Elgort found his love for performing through dance. He was featured tap-dancing at the CFDA Awards in 2011, and as a child he performed both in "The Nutcracker" and "Swan Lake" at Lincoln Center with the New York City Ballet. As a singer, Elgort has worked with many composers including Jason Robert Brown and Louis Andriessen.

He currently resides in New York.

RACHEL ZEGLER (María) is a dynamic actress and singer who has already established herself as a trailblazer of her generation.

Rachel will star in Disney's live-action remake of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," which is set to begin production in 2022. Rachel is one of the first Latina actresses to star in a live-action Disney film. Director Marc Webb said, "Rachel's extraordinary vocal abilities are just the beginning of her gifts. Her strength, intelligence and optimism will become an integral part of rediscovering the joy in this classic Disney fairytale." In addition, Rachel is set to appear alongside Zachary Levi, Helen Mirren and Lucy Lui in D.C. Comics' "Shazam! Fury of the Gods," the sequel to the successful predecessor, "Shazam!" The film is set to be released in summer of 2023 and has recently wrapped production.

Rachel was recently featured on the September cover of Town & Country Magazine, and in the past year, was profiled by Vogue and V Magazine. She was recognized by Variety in their annual "Power of Young Hollywood Impact List," highlighting her as a star to watch. She was also recently recognized by Elle Magazine as one of the "Nine Latinx Women in Hollywood Currently Changing the World." On Latinx representation in entertainment, a subject she is passionate about, Rachel says, "We are not just the quirky side character who occasionally says a word in Spanish, we are the main character."

ARIANA DEBOSE (Anita) is a Tony Award®-nominated actress and 2021 Forbes 30 under 30 honoree known for her varying roles on stage as well as onscreen. DeBose is perhaps best known for her role as "Disco Donna" in "Summer: The Donna Summer Musical," which earned her a 2018 Tony Award® nomination for Best Featured Actress in a Musical. For the same role, she was nominated for a Drama League Award for Distinguished Performance and won a Chita Rivera Award for Outstanding Female Dancer in a Broadway Show.

Last December, DeBose starred in Ryan Murphy's Netflix adaptation of the hit Broadway musical "The Prom," where she played the role of Alyssa alongside Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, Kerry Washington and James Corden. This past summer, DeBose had a breakout role in "Schmigadoon!" the Lorne Michaels' executive produced Apple TV+ musical comedy series alongside Kristin Chenoweth, Keegan-Michael Key and Cecily Strong. It was also recently announced that she joined the cast of Gabriela Cowperthwaite's space thriller "ISS" and will star in the film alongside Chris Messina and Pilou Asbaek.

In 2015, DeBose appeared alongside Lin-Manuel Miranda in the groundbreaking, Tony Award®-winning musical "Hamilton" as a member of the original cast in both the Broadway and off-Broadway productions. A film version of the production was released on Disney+ on July 3rd. After her departure from "Hamilton" in 2016, DeBose completed a run as Jane in the original Broadway cast of "A Bronx Tale."

Her additional theater credits include Leading Player in the Tony Award®-winning revival of "Pippin," Mary Wilson of the Supremes in "Motown The Musical," Nautica in Andy Blankenbuehler's "Bring It On: The Musical" and ensemble in Stephen Sondheim's "Company." Other credits include "The Breaks" (VH1), "Blue Bloods" (CBS), OLTL's "Star Crossed Lovers" series and season 6 of "So You Think You Can Dance" (FOX), where she was a top-20 finalist.

DeBose currently sits on the International Board of Covenant House advocating for homeless youth, many of whom identify as LGBTQIA+. She is also a board member of A is For, a reproductive rights organization started by Martha Plimpton that works to ensure that all women have access to reproductive and abortion care free of stigma.

DeBose resides in New York.

DAVID ALVAREZ (Bernardo) is an accomplished actor, singer and dancer. Alvarez is best known for his titular role in the 2008 Broadway production of "Billy Elliot the Musical" for which he earned the Tony Award® for Best Actor in a Musical alongside his co-stars Trent Kowalik and Kiril Kulish at the age of fifteen.

On the television side, Alvarez is currently in production on the Showtime series "Rust" alongside Maura Tierney and Jeff Daniels. Based on Philipp Meyer's novel "American Rust," the Showtime adaptation will explore the tattered American dream through the eyes of complicated chief of police Del Harris in a Rust Belt town in southwest Pennsylvania. When the woman he truly loves sees her son accused of murder, Harris is forced to decide what he's willing to do to protect him.

Alvarez began studying ballet at a young age and in 2005 was given a scholarship to study at the prestigious American Theater School. After serving in the U.S. Army, Alvarez returned to the theater in 2014 in the revival of "On the Town" at the Lyric Theatre.

RITA MORENO (Valentina/Executive Producer) has won all four of the most prestigious awards in show business: an Oscar®, a Tony®, two Emmys® and a GRAMMY®. Her countless credits span more than seven decades, beginning with her Broadway debut at age thirteen. Moreno has starred on Broadway and London's West End, appeared in more than forty feature films and countless television shows and has performed in numerous regional theaters, including her one woman show "Life Without Makeup" at the Berkeley Rep.

Most recently, Moreno starred in the critically acclaimed Latinx reimagining of Norman Lear's classic sitcom "One Day at a Time" on Netflix. Her documentary "Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided

to Go for It" for American Masters Pictures had its world debut at Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. The film was released theatrically in over 220 theaters nationwide and will have its international release this winter. The film had its television debut on PBS and is now available to stream on Netflix. She also stars in the upcoming feature film "The Prank," due to be released in 2022. When she is not shooting a television show or film, Rita lectures and/or performs as a guest artist with symphony orchestras across the country.

Recipient of the Peabody Career Achievement Award and the Kennedy Center Honor for her lifetime contributions to American culture, she was also honored by her peers as the 50th recipient of the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award. She recently served as Grand Marshal of the Rose Parade and the National Puerto Rican Day Parade.

Moreno's first ever all-Spanish language album "Una Vez Más" was produced by her good friend Emilio Estefan and she is a New York Times bestselling author with her first book "Rita Moreno: A Memoir," published by Celebra Books.

Moreno has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush and the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama.

BRIAN d'ARCY JAMES (Officer Krupke) was awarded the 2016 SAG Award, Critics Choice Award®, Gotham Award and the Independent Spirit's Robert Altman Award for Best Ensemble for his portrayal of Matt Carroll in the 2016 Oscar® winner for Best Picture, "Spotlight" starring opposite Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo and Rachel McAdams.

He can be seen starring in "The Cathedral," which premiered at this year's Venice Film Festival.

Other recent credits include "The Kitchen" opposite Melissa McCarthy, "Beneath the Blue Suburban Skies," "Song of Back and Neck" opposite Rosemary DeWitt, "All These Small Moments" opposite Molly Ringwald and Damien Chazelle's "First Man" opposite Ryan Gosling. He played the President of the United States in "X-Men: Dark Phoenix."

Other film credits include Aaron Sorkin's directorial debut "Molly's Game" opposite Idris Elba and Jessica Chastain, "Mark Felt: The Man Who Took Down the White House" with Liam Neeson, Stephen King's "1922," Danny Strong's J.D. Salinger biopic "Rebel and The Rye" starring Nicholas Hoult and Theresa Rebeck's "Trouble" starring Anjelica Huston.

At the 2017 Toronto Film Festival, the Creative Coalition awarded James with their Spotlight Award, presented to him by Aaron Sorkin on behalf of Brian's work in "Felt" and "Molly's Game."

James's work in television is extensive. He is an executive producer on the upcoming series "Smallwood" for CBS starring Pete Holmes. He recently wrapped a role in Marvel's highly anticipated "Hawkeye."

He can be seen in the miniseries "The Comey Rule" on Showtime and "Devs" on Hulu, and he recurred as Andrew Baker in the hit Netflix series "13 Reasons Why."

Other credits include a critically acclaimed guest starring role as Harvard Professor Henry Murray in Discovery Channel's "Manhunt: Unabomber," as well as roles on "The Big C" and "Smash."

James is a celebrated stage actor who most recently starred in "The Ferryman" on Broadway, directed by Sam Mendes. He has received three Tony Award® nominations for his work on Broadway in the hit musicals "Something Rotten," "Shrek the Musical" and "Sweet Smell of Success."

Brian was awarded an OBIE Award for his critically acclaimed performance in Conor McPherson's "The Good Thief." In 2015, he originated the role of King George III in Lin-Manuel Miranda's "Hamilton" off-Broadway and was honored to reprise it on Broadway in the summer of 2017.

As a concert artist, James has performed worldwide at venues that include the White House, Madison Square Garden and Carnegie Hall.

COREY STOLL (Lieutenant Schrank) is a well-known stage, screen and television actor who has earned a Golden Globe® nomination for his performance in "House of Cards." Other television appearances are "Law & Order," "Homeland," "The Good Wife," "The Romanoffs" and many others.

Stoll's film credits include "First Man," "The Seagull," "Cafe Society," "Midnight in Paris," "Ant-Man," "The Bourne Legacy" and many others. His stage appearances notably include "Intimate Apparel," "Some Americans Abroad," "A View from the Bridge," "Plenty," Brutus in "Julius Caesar," Iago in "Othello" and the title role in "Macbeth."

MIKE FAIST (Riff) was nominated for a 2017 Tony Award® for the role of Connor Murphy in the hit Broadway musical "Dear Evan Hansen." He appeared on Broadway in the original company of "Newsies." His off-Broadway credits include "Days of Rage" (Second Stage), "Dear Evan Hansen" (Second Stage, Arena Stage), "A Month in the Country" (Classic Stage Co.) and "Appropriate" (Signature Theatre). His television credits include "Law & Order: SVU," "Deception," and films "Wildling," "I Can, I Will, I Did," "The Grief of Others," "License Plates," "Active Adults,"

"Touched with Fire" and the upcoming "The Atlantic City Story." Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Mike is the Founding Artistic Director of the Ohio Artists Gathering.

JOSH ANDRÉS RIVERA (Chino) most recently shot a series lead in the HBO Max pilot "Vegas High," under the direction of Gillian Robespierre.

A seasoned stage actor, Josh most notably performed in the original company on the first national tour of the smash hit musical "Hamilton." He will also originate the role of Dallas in the pre-Broadway musical production of "The Outsiders," which will be staged during the 2021-2022 season at Chicago's Goodman Theater.

IRIS MENAS (Anybodys) made Hir voiceover debut as the first animated non-binary character, Odie the Okapi, in the DreamWorks episodic "Madagascar: A Little Wild." iris also voices an adorable non-binary bison named Fred in the debut Netflix series "Ridley Jones" created by Chris Nee.

"West Side Story" is iris' feature film debut.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

STEVEN SPIELBERG (Director/Producer) is one of the world's most successful and influential filmmakers, and is currently chairman of Amblin Partners, a corporate descendent of DreamWorks, SKG, which he co-founded in 1994. Among a host of career accolades, he is a three-time Academy Award® winner, a Kennedy Center Honoree, a recipient of the Irving G. Thalberg Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015 from President Barack Obama.

Spielberg is the top-grossing director of all time, having helmed such blockbusters as "Jaws," "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," the "Indiana Jones" franchise and "Jurassic Park." He took home his first two Oscars® for Best Director and Best Picture, for the internationally lauded "Schindler's List," which received a total of seven Oscars®. The film was also named the Best Picture of 1993 by many of the major critics' organizations, in addition to winning seven BAFTA Awards and three Golden Globe

Awards®, both including Best Picture and Best Director. Spielberg also won the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award for his work on the film.

Spielberg won his third Academy Award® for Best Director for the World War II drama "Saving Private Ryan," which was the highest-grossing release (domestically) of 1998. It was also one of the year's most honored films, earning four additional Oscars®, as well as two Golden Globe Awards®, for Best Picture: Drama and Best Director and numerous critics' groups awards in the same categories. Spielberg also won another DGA Award and shared a Producers Guild of America (PGA) Award with the film's other producers. That same year, the PGA also presented Spielberg with the prestigious Milestone Award for his historic contribution to the motion picture industry.

He has also earned Academy Award® nominations for Best Director for "Lincoln," "Munich," "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Additionally, he earned DGA Award nominations for those films, as well as "Amistad," "Empire of the Sun," "The Color Purple" and "Jaws." With eleven to date, Spielberg has been honored by his peers with more DGA Award nominations than any other director. In 2000, he received the DGA's Lifetime Achievement Award. He is also the recipient of the Irving G. Thalberg Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Hollywood Foreign Press' Cecil B. DeMille Award, the Kennedy Center Honor and numerous other career tributes.

In 2012, Spielberg directed "Lincoln," based in part on author Doris Kearns Goodwin's "Team of Rivals." The film garnered 12 Academy Award® nominations, winning two Oscars®, for Best Actor for Daniel Day-Lewis's portrayal of the iconic 16th President and for Best Production Design.

Spielberg's 2015 dramatic thriller "Bridge of Spies," starring Tom Hanks, received six Academy Award® nominations including Best Picture, with Mark Rylance winning the Oscar® for Best Supporting Actor. That same year, he was also an executive producer on "Jurassic World," which earned over $1.6 billion worldwide. Directed by Colin Trevorrow and starring Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard, it was the fourth film in the "Jurassic" series. A follow-up to the blockbuster, directed by J.A. Bayona, was released in 2018, with a sixth film, "Jurassic World: Dominion," slated for release in 2022.

More recently, Spielberg directed and produced the 2017 drama "The Post," starring Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks. The film earned two Academy Award® nominations, one for Best Picture, as well as Meryl Streep's 21st nod for Best Actress. He also directed the 2018 film "Ready Player One," based the science fiction novel by Ernest Cline, which became an instant blockbuster, going on to earn over $580 million worldwide.

In addition to directing the reimagining of "West Side Story," Spielberg recently wrapped production on an untitled semi-autobiographical film, which he co-wrote with long-time collaborator Tony Kushner.

Spielberg's career began with the 1968 short film "Amblin," which led to him becoming the youngest director ever signed to a long-term studio deal. He directed episodes of such television shows as "Night Gallery," "Marcus Welby, M.D." and "Columbo," and gained special attention for his 1971 telefilm "Duel." Three years later, he made his feature film directorial debut on "The Sugarland Express," from a screenplay he co-wrote. His next film was "Jaws," which was the first film to break the $100 million mark at the box office.

In 1984, Spielberg formed his own production company, Amblin Entertainment. Under the Amblin Entertainment banner, he served as producer or executive producer on such hits as "Gremlins," "Goonies," the "Back to the Future" trilogy, "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?," "An American Tail," "Twister," "The Mask of Zorro" and the "Men in Black" films.

Ten years later, Spielberg partnered with Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen to form the original DreamWorks Studios. The studio enjoyed both critical and commercial successes, including three consecutive Best Picture Academy Award® winners: "American Beauty," "Gladiator" and "A Beautiful Mind." In its history, DreamWorks also produced or co-produced a wide range of features, including the "Transformers" blockbusters; Clint Eastwood's World War II dramas "Flags of Our Fathers" and "Letters from Iwo Jima," the latter earning a Best Picture Oscar® nomination; "Meet the Parents" and "Meet the Fockers" and "The Ring," to name only a few. Under the DreamWorks banner, Spielberg also directed such films as "War of the Worlds," "Minority Report," "Catch Me If You Can" and "A.I. Artificial Intelligence."

Spielberg has not limited his success to the big screen. He was an executive producer on the long-running Emmy Award®-winning NBC television drama "E.R." On the heels of their experience on "Saving Private Ryan," he and Tom Hanks teamed to executive produce the 2001 HBO miniseries "Band of Brothers," based on Stephen Ambrose's book about a U.S. Army unit in Europe during World War II.

Among its many awards, the project won both Emmy® and Golden Globe Awards® for Outstanding Miniseries. He and Hanks then reunited to executive produce the acclaimed 2010 HBO miniseries "The Pacific," this time focusing on the Marines in the second World War's Pacific theatre. "The Pacific" won eight Emmy Awards®, including Outstanding Miniseries. A third series, "Masters of the Air," is currently in production for Apple TV+.

Among the shows Spielberg also executive produced were the Emmy®-winning Syfy Channel miniseries "Taken," the TNT miniseries "Into the West," the Showtime series "The United States of Tara," NBC's "Smash," TNT's "Falling Skies," as well as CBS' "Under the Dome" and "Extant." He was also an executive producer on the HBO Films' movie "All the Way," starring Emmy Award® winner Bryan Cranston, and the Netflix docuseries "Five Came Back." Amblin Television was a producer of FX's "The Americans," which earned four Emmy® wins, including two wins for Margo Martindale for

Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series. The series also won Peabody Awards in 2015 and 2019 and was a perennial recipient of the AFI Award for Television Program of the Year.

Spielberg has devoted much of his time and resources to many philanthropic causes. He formed The Righteous Persons Foundation by using all his profits from the release of "Schindler's List," and soon thereafter founded the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which in 2006 became the USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education. The Institute has recorded more than 55,000 video testimonies with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides and is dedicated to making the testimonies a compelling voice for education and action.

In 2021, Spielberg and Kate Capshaw formally launched The Hearthland Foundation, a philanthropic fund to help build a more just, equitable and connected America. Inspired by the words of the poet Langston Hughes, "O, let America be America again—The land that never has been yet—And yet must be," Hearthland is founded on the belief that creating a better shared future for our country calls for relationships that cross divides and the moral imagination for what is possible. To that end, the foundation has three overlapping areas of focus: building a shared democracy; telling an honest and generative narrative about this country; and fostering a culture of accompaniment.

TONY KUSHNER's **(Screenwriter/Executive Producer)** plays include "A Bright Room Called Day"; "Angels in America," Parts One and Two; "Homebody/Kabul"; the musical "Caroline, or Change" and the opera "A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck," both with composer Jeanine Tesori; and "The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide To Capitalism And Socialism With A Key To The Scriptures." He has adapted Pierre Corneille's "The Illusion," S.Y. Ansky's "The Dybbuk," Bertolt Brecht's "The Good Person of Szechwan" and "Mother Courage and Her Children" and the English language libretto for the opera "Brundibár" by Hans Krasa. He wrote the screenplay for Mike Nichols's film version of "Angels in America" and the screenplays for Steven Spielberg's films "Munich," "Lincoln" and an untitled film co-written and directed by Steven Spielberg, to be released in November 2022. His books include "Brundibar," with illustrations by Maurice Sendak, "The Art of Maurice Sendak: 1980 to the Present" and "Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict," co-edited with Alisa Solomon. Kushner is the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, two Tony Awards®, three Obie Awards, two Evening Standard Awards, an Olivier Award, an Emmy Award®, two Oscar® nominations and the Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award, among other honors. In 2012, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama. He lives in Manhattan with his husband Mark Harris.

KRISTIE MACOSKO KRIEGER (Producer) is an Academy Award®, Emmy®, BAFTA and PGA Award nominated producer whose working relationship with director Steven Spielberg spans over twenty years. In October, she wrapped production on Spielberg's untitled next film, a semi-autobiographical project, which stars Michelle Williams, Paul Dano, Seth Rogan and Gabriel LaBelle. Over the past year she has executive produced Aaron Sorkin's Oscar®-nominated film "The Trial of the Chicago 7," as well as "Oslo," which was nominated for two Emmy Awards®, including Outstanding Television Movie. She is also producing "Maestro," Bradley Cooper's upcoming Leonard Bernstein biopic for Netflix.

Previously, Krieger produced the Spielberg-directed films "Ready Player One," "The Post" and "Bridge of Spies." Additional producing credits include "Lincoln," "War Horse," "The BFG" and "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull."

She serves on the Executive Committee of the AMPAS Producers Branch, the PGA National Board of Directors, the Peabody Awards Board of Directors West Coast and as a member of the Board of Directors of Amblin Partners. She is currently part of the senior leadership team at Amblin Partners, where she is involved with all aspects of Spielberg's productions and helps guide the strategic direction of the company. Krieger began her career with the USC Shoah Foundation, where she served as head of worldwide publicity. She joined the staff of DreamWorks Studios in 1997. Krieger, a graduate of UC Davis, resides in Los Angeles with her husband and son.

KEVIN McCOLLUM (Producer) received the Tony Award® for Best Musical for "Rent" (1996), "Avenue Q" (2004) and "In the Heights" (2008).

He is currently in production on "SIX" (Broadway), "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Broadway) and Olivier-winning "The Play That Goes Wrong" (off-Broadway, U.S. Tour).

He produced "Something Rotten!" (Broadway, National Tour), "Hand to God" (Broadway, West End), "Motown: The Musical" (Broadway, West End, U.K. and U.S. Tours) and "The Drowsy Chaperone" (Broadway, West End, National Tour), which won five Tony® Awards.

Mr. McCollum's upcoming productions include the Broadway production of "The Devil Wears Prada" and "The Notebook."

DANIEL LUPI (Executive Producer) most recently executive produced Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon."

He has also executive produced Spielberg's "Ready Player One," "Bridge of Spies," the Oscar®- and BAFTA-nominated biographical drama "Lincoln" and "Catch Me If You Can." He executive produced Spike Jonze's critically acclaimed, Oscar®-winning film "Her" and Jordan Peele's film "US."

Lupi has collaborated with Paul Thomas Anderson on eight of his films, including "Phantom Thread" and "There Will Be Blood," which received a Best Picture Oscar® nomination, "Inherent Vice," "The Master," "Punch-Drunk Love," "Magnolia," "Boogie Nights" and "Hard Eight."

ADAM SOMNER (Executive Producer) served as an executive producer on Martin Scorsese's "The Killers of the Flower Moon" and as a producer on Paul Thomas Anderson's "Licorice Pizza."

He has also collaborated with Steven Spielberg's as an executive and co-producer on numerous other productions, including "The Post," "Ready Player One," "Lincoln," "Bridge of Spies," "The BFG" and "War Horse," and was an associate producer on "The Adventures of Tintin."

He has also collaborated several other times with director Paul Thomas Anderson, serving as an executive producer on "Phantom Thread," "Inherent Vice" and "The Master."

In addition, Somner was an executive producer on Angelina Jolie's "First They Killed My Father," and co-produced Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street" and Ridley Scott's "Exodus: Gods and Kings."

He also held the post of first assistant director on almost all of the aforementioned films. His many other credits as an assistant director include Spielberg's "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," "Munich" and "War of the Worlds," Anderson's "There Will Be Blood," Ridley Scott's "Kingdom of Heaven," "Black Hawk Down" and "Gladiator," and Gary Ross's "Seabiscuit."

JANUSZ KAMINSKI (Director of Photography) was born in Poland during the communist regime, and left Poland in 1980 to arrive in the United States as a political refugee in 1981. Kaminski graduated from Columbia Collage in 1987 where he studied cinematography, and subsequently entered the American Film Institute in 1987 as a cinematography fellow.

Kaminski has created some of the most lasting and memorable images in cinema history through his visual storytelling. He established a partnership with director Steven Spielberg, working as a director of photography on his films since 1993 when they first worked together on "Schindler's List," rewarding Kaminski with an Oscar® for Best Cinematography. Kaminski won his second Oscar® for Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" (1998). The duo has worked together on many hits since then, including the Oscar®-nominated "The Post" (2017) starring Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks, the highly

popular blockbuster “Ready Player One” (2018), “The BFG” (2016), the Oscar®-nominated “Bridge of Spies” (2015), “Lincoln” (2012) and “War Horse” (2011), the last two rewarding Kaminski with Oscar® nominations. Additionally, Kaminski is the cinematographer behind “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull” (2008) with Harrison Ford, “Munich” (2005), “War of the Worlds” (2005) with Tom Cruise, “The Terminal” (2004) with Tom Hanks, “Catch Me If You Can” (2002) with Leonardo DiCaprio, “Minority Report” (2002), “A.I. Artificial Intelligence” (2001), “Amistad” (1997) for which Kaminski received an Oscar® nomination and finally “The Lost World: Jurassic Park” (1997).

Kaminski has collaborated with other top directors like Chris Sanders on “The Call of the Wild” (2020), David Dobkin on “The Judge” (2014), Cameron Crowe on “Jerry Maguire” (1996) and Julian Schnabel on “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly” (2007), which rewarded Kaminski with another Academy Award® nomination.

As a director, Kaminski’s work includes “Making a Scene” (2013) for The New York Times, the horror film “Lost Souls” (2000) starring Winona Ryder and Ben Chaplin, episodes for the series “The Divide” (WeTV, 2014) and “The Event” (NBC, 2011), as well as the 2021 film “American Dream.”

Mr. Kaminski’s most recent work includes the HBO film “Oslo” (2021) and Steven Spielberg’s upcoming untitled semi-autobiographical feature starring Michelle Williams, Seth Rogen and Paul Dano.

ADAM STOCKHAUSEN (Production Designer) is an award-winning production designer who has worked with directors such as Wes Craven, Charlie Kaufman and Wes Anderson.

Some of Adam’s credits include “Ash Tuesday,” “The Darjeeling Limited,” “Margot at the Wedding,” “Synecdoche, New York,” “State of Play,” “8,” “Every Day,” “The Switch,” “My Soul to Take,” “Scream 4,” “Moonrise Kingdom” and “12 Years a Slave,” for which he received his first nominations for an Academy Award®, a BAFTA Award and an ADG Award.

He has also collaborated with Steven Spielberg on “Bridge of Spies,” for which he received nominations for an Academy Award®, a BAFTA Award and an ADG Award, and “Ready Player One.”

Adam’s work with Wes Anderson has led to him receiving an Academy Award®, a BAFTA Award and an ADG Award for his work on “The Grand Budapest Hotel,” as well as a second ADG Award for his work on “Isle of Dogs.” Most recently, they worked together on “The French Dispatch.”

Today, Adam can be found working on both Wes Anderson’s next feature “Asteroid City” and the upcoming “Indiana Jones” project with director James Mangold.

MICHAEL KAHN (Editor), one of the most honored editors in motion picture history, has enjoyed a long association with Steven Spielberg, spanning more than four decades. He is a three-time Academy Award® winner for his work on Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan," "Schindler's List," also winning a BAFTA Award, and "Raiders of the Lost Ark." He received Oscar® nominations for the Spielberg-directed films "Lincoln," "Munich," "Empire of the Sun" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," which marked their first collaboration.

Kahn more recently teamed with Spielberg on two true-life films: "Bridge of Spies," for which he received his latest of seven BAFTA Award nominations, and "The Post." He also edited Spielberg's recent film "Ready Player One." His work with the director also encompasses "The BFG," "War Horse," "The Adventures of Tintin," "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," "War of the Worlds," "The Terminal," "Catch Me If You Can," "Minority Report," "A.I. Artificial Intelligence," "Amistad," "The Lost World: Jurassic Park," "Jurassic Park," "Hook," "Always," "The Color Purple," "1941," "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

In addition, Kahn earned an Oscar® nomination and won a BAFTA Award for his editing work on Adrian Lyne's classic thriller "Fatal Attraction." His film editing credits over the course of his long career also include Ulu Grosbard's "Falling in Love," Tobe Hooper's "Poltergeist," Robert Zemeckis' "Used Cars," Richard Donner's "The Goonies" and Irvin Kernsher's "The Return of a Man Called Horse."

SARAH BROSHAR (Editor) has collaborated on a Steven Spielberg-directed film eight times. Along with Michael Kahn, Broshar co-edited "The Post" and "Ready Player One" and is currently co-editing Spielberg's upcoming untitled film. She served as additional editor on "Bridge of Spies" and "The BFG," after working as first assistant editor on "War Horse" and "Lincoln." She began her journey with Spielberg and Kahn in 2009 by operating the Avid with Kahn on "The Adventures of Tintin," and continued to hone her craft while also editing independent feature films. In 2019, Sarah edited Paramount's hit "Pet Sematary." She has also edited a number of independent features and was nominated for an ACE Eddie Award for "The Post." Sarah is a graduate of the American Film Institute and Northwestern University.

CINDY TOLAN (Casting) – Tolan's select film credits include Spielberg's upcoming untitled film, "The Batman," Disney's "Disenchanted," "Straight Outta Compton," "If Beale Street Could Talk," "The Namesake," "The Place Beyond the Pines," "Blue Valentine" and "Maggie's Plan."

On the small screen, select projects include Emmy® awarded "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," "Girls5Eva," "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt," "Wormwood" and "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks."

Tolan's stage credits include the current Broadway revival of Sondheim's "Company," "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," "Avenue Q," Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella," "Betrayal," "A View from the Bridge" and "All My Sons."

She produced the HBO documentary "Arthur Miller: Writer" and the 2019 West End revival of "Death of a Salesman."

PAUL TAZEWELL (Costume Designer) has been designing costumes for Broadway, regional theater, film and television, dance and opera productions for close to thirty years.

He began his Broadway career with the groundbreaking musical "Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk" directed by George C. Wolfe.

Most recently, Paul is known for his work with both of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Tony Award®-winning, original Broadway productions of "Hamilton" and "In the Heights." Additionally, you can see his work at the Metropolitan Opera's "Fire Shut Up in My Bones," the Met's first performance of an opera by a Black composer, and the upcoming Broadway production of "MJ The Musical."

Tazewell's Broadway credits include "Ain't Too Proud," "The Color Purple," "Doctor Zhivago," "Memphis," "Caroline, or Change," "Elaine Stritch at Liberty," "Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam," "Lombardi" and "Magic/Bird." His revival work includes "Side Show," "A Streetcar Named Desire," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Guys and Dolls," "A Raisin in the Sun" and "On the Town."

In the United States and across the globe, Paul has designed for such renowned companies as The Metropolitan Opera, The Bolshoi Ballet, The English National Opera, Theatre du Chatelet, The Public Theater, The National Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera and many more.

Paul's feature film credits include "Harriet" for Focus Features and "Hamilton" for Disney+. Television credits include the HBO Original Film "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," starring Oprah Winfrey, and both "The Wiz Live!" and "Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert" for NBC. In 2016, he received an Emmy Award® for NBC's "The Wiz Live!" and a Tony Award® for "Hamilton." Other notable honors include two Lucille Lortel Awards, four Helen Hayes Awards, a Princess Grace Foundation Fellowship and The Princess Grace Statue Award.

Paul holds an MFA from New York University and a BFA from North Carolina School of the Arts. He has been privileged instructing students as a guest artist at both New York University and North Carolina School of the Arts. From 2003-2006, he held a faculty position at Carnegie Mellon University.

JUSTIN PECK (Choreographer) is a Tony Award®-winning choreographer, director, filmmaker and dancer based in New York City.

He is currently the acting Resident Choreographer of New York City Ballet.

Peck began choreographing in 2009 at the New York Choreographic Institute. In 2014, after the creation of his acclaimed ballet "Everywhere We Go," he was appointed as Resident Choreographer of New York City Ballet. He is the second person in the institution's history to hold this title.

After attending the School of American Ballet at Lincoln Center from 2003-2006, Peck was invited to join the New York City Ballet as a dancer in 2006. At New York City Ballet, Peck has danced a vast repertoire of works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Alexei Ratmansky, Lynn Taylor-Corbett, Benjamin Millepied, Christopher Wheeldon and many others. In 2013, Peck was promoted to the rank of Soloist, performing full-time through 2019 with the company.

Peck has created over forty ballets worldwide, with twenty of those created for New York City Ballet. His stage works have been performed by Paris Opera Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Dresden Semperoper Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, Boston Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Miami City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, L.A. Dance Project, Dutch National Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Houston Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Ballet Austin, Ballet Bordeaux, Finnish National Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet and Ballet Arizona.

Working on a wide array of projects, Peck's collaborators includes composers Sufjan Stevens, Bryce Dessner (The National), Nico Muhly, Dan Deacon, Caroline Shaw, Chris Thile, Stephen Sondheim, M83 and Dolly Parton; visual artists Shepard Fairey, Marcel Dzama, John Baldessari, Karl Jensen, George Condo, Steve Powers and Jules de Balincourt; fashion designers Mary Katrantzou, Humberto Leon (Kenzo, Opening Ceremony), Tsumori Chisato and Dries Van Noten; and filmmakers Steven Spielberg, Sofia Coppola, Damien Chazelle, Frances Lawrence and Jody Lee Lipes.

In 2014, Peck was the subject of the documentary "Ballet 422," which presents Peck's craft and creative process as a choreographer in great detail as he creates New York City Ballet's 422nd commissioned dance.

Peck has worked extensively as a filmmaker. In particular, his focus has been exploring new innovative ways of presenting dance on film. Peck choreographed the feature film "Red Sparrow" (2016) Peck's work as a director and choreographer for music videos include "The Dark Side of the

Gym" (2017) for The National, "Thank You, New York" (2020) for Chris Thile and "The Times Are Racing" (2017) for Dan Deacon. In 2018, Peck directed The New York Times series "Great Performers" starring Julia Roberts, Ethan Hawke, Lakeith Stanfield, Glenn Close, Toni Collette, Yoo Ah-in, Emma Stone, Olivia Colman, Regina Hall, Yalitzia Aparicio, Elsie Fischer and Rachel Weisz.

Peck choreographed the 2018 Broadway revival of "Carousel." The production was directed by Jack O'Brien and stars Jessie Mueller, Joshua Henry and Renée Fleming.

Peck has been awarded the National Arts Award (2018), the Golden Plate Honor from the Academy of Achievement (2019), the Bessie Award for his ballet "Rodeo: Four Dance Episodes" (2015), the Gross Family Prize for his ballet "Everywhere We Go" (2014) and a Tony Award® for his choreography for Broadway's "Carousel" (2018).

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL (Conductor), a Venezuelan musician, composer and conductor is driven by the belief that music has the power to transform lives, to inspire and to change the world. Currently serving as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Opéra National de Paris and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra. Dudamel is widely recognized as one of the most decorated conductors of his generation, and through his dynamic presence on the podium and his tireless advocacy for arts education, he has introduced classical music to new audiences around the globe and has helped to provide access to the arts for countless people in underserved communities.

One of the few classical musicians to become a bona fide pop culture phenomenon, Dudamel's film credits include "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," "Mozart in the Jungle," "Sesame Street," "The Simpsons" and more. He has performed at the Super Bowl Halftime Show, the Academy Awards® and the Nobel Prize Concert, and has worked with pop stars like Coldplay, Billie Eilish, Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, Bruno Mars and more. Among his many honors, he has received Spain's Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, the Americas Society Cultural Achievement Award, a Chevalier of l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people.

His extensive, multiple-GRAMMY® award-winning discography includes sixty-five releases, including recent Deutsche Grammophon Los Angeles Philharmonic recordings of the Mahler's Symphony No. 8, "Charles Ives: Complete Symphonies" and Andrew Norman's "Sustain," with Ives and Norman both winning the GRAMMY® for Best Orchestral Performance. Inspired by his transformative experience as a youth in Venezuela's immersive musical training program El Sistema, he created The Dudamel Foundation in 2012 with the goal to expand access to music and the arts by providing tools and opportunities for young people to shape their creative futures.

DAVID NEWMAN (Music Arranger) is one of today's most accomplished creators of music for film. In his thirty-year career he has scored more than 110 films, ranging from "War of the Roses," "Matilda," "Bowfinger" and "Heathers" to the more recent "Girls Trip," "Night School" and "Serenity." His music has brought to life the critically acclaimed dramas "Brokedown Palace" and "Hoffa," comedies such as "Galaxy Quest" and "Throw Momma from the Train," and award-winning animated films "Ice Age," "The Brave Little Toaster" and "Anastasia," for which he received an Academy Award® nomination. The maestro frequently conducts celebrated film music events with prestigious orchestras at the Hollywood Bowl and around the globe, where he shares his vast knowledge of film music history and insightful, fun personal anecdotes of himself and his musical family with audiences. Most recently he conducted a live-to-picture concert of "Wizard of Oz" for the opening of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and "The Princess Bride" live at the Hollywood Bowl.

After the success of the Netflix series "Green Eggs and Ham," he will also score the second season of the series, to be released in late 2021.

JEANINE TESORI (Supervising Vocal Producer) is a composer of musical theater, opera, motion pictures and television. She won the Tony Award® for Best Score with writer and lyricist, Lisa Kron for the musical "Fun Home." Her other musicals include "Caroline, or Change" with Tony Kushner, "Shrek the Musical" with David Lindsay-Abaire, "Thoroughly Modern Millie" with Dick Scanlan, "Violet" with Brian Crawley and "Soft Power" with David Henry-Hwang, which was her second work after "Fun Home" to be a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Along with Missy Mazzoli, she is one of the first women to be commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera. Her operas include "A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck" Tony Kushner, "The Lion, The Unicorn and Me" J.D. McClatchy, "Blue" Tazewell Thompson which was awarded the MCANA Award for Best New Opera, and the upcoming "Grounded" George Brant at the Met. Her motion picture credits include "Shrek the Musical," "Nights in Rodanthe," "Every Day" and the upcoming "Fun Home." In addition to her work as a composer, she is the founding artistic director of New York City Center's Encores! Off-Center Series, the founding creative director of A BroaderWay, an arts empowerment program for young women and a lecturer at Yale University.

MATT SULLIVAN (Executive Music Producer), a three-time GRAMMY®-nominated music supervisor and producer, has proven himself as a leader in the film industry. Fifteen of the thirty-three films to his credit are dedicated box office hit film musicals; Sullivan's name is synonymous with mega-musicals. He has shepherded the music and soundtracks for award-winning musicals from "Chicago" to "Dreamgirls," to the recent "Aladdin" and "Beauty and the Beast." Sullivan is a stand-out in handling duties on both large budget film musicals and music-driven films, including the Oscar®-nominated "Saving Mr. Banks."

The start of Sullivan's career coincided with the resurgence of movie musicals, with the defining film classic "Chicago." Sullivan's distinguished resume continues to grow with box office successes including "Hairspray," "Dreamgirls," "Rent," "Rock of Ages," "Aladdin," "Beauty and the Beast," "Nine," "Idlewild," "Annie," "Danny Collins" and "Begin Again." His current projects include Disney's "DisEnchanted" (Adam Shankman) and "Pinocchio" (Bob Zemeckis).

Sullivan's unique approach in working on a film starts at the script and audition stage and concludes with the film's final sound mix. Directors and actors alike trust him in the recording studio and on set to achieve the best performance and the telling of the story's narrative through music and lyrics. His unique approach is embraced by a wide array of filmmakers included stage and film directors such as Rob Marshall, Bill Condon and Adam Shankman. In addition, he works alongside traditional filmmakers outside of the musical space including Steven Spielberg and Robert Zemeckis.

Sullivan's accomplishments were recognized with the Oscar® award-winning film "Chicago," whose soundtrack garnered both Oscar® and GRAMMY® nominations and wins. Other notable contributions include music producer/supervisor of three Oscar® nominated songs for "Dreamgirls." The film "Nine" was recognized with an Oscar® nomination for Best Song for "Take It All," a track which Sullivan produced. Dreamgirls also earned him his first GRAMMY® nomination for Soundtrack Producer, as well as a Broadcast Critics award for Best Soundtrack. Subsequent GRAMMY® nominations include the "Hairspray" and "Rock of Ages" soundtracks.

Sullivan's unique contributions to the modern blockbuster movie musicals has added to a unique and thriving genre in the cinematic world.

PATRICIA DELGADO (Associate Choreographer), a first-generation Cuban American born in Miami, Florida, was a principal dancer with the Miami City Ballet and is currently a freelance artist living in New York City. She began her dance training under Cuban tutelage at five-years-old. She spent summers training in New York City at the School of American Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. In 2000, she was the Princess Grace Nominee, and Edward Villella invited her to join the company as an apprentice.

Patricia Delgado has performed works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor, Anthony Tudor, Richard Alston, Christopher Wheeldon, Edward Villella and Trey McIntyre, as well as classical works such as "Coppelia," "Giselle" and "Don Quixote." One of her most memorable performances was performing the role of Juliet in John Cranko's "Romeo and Juliet." Patricia has also been incredibly fortunate to have created feature works with choreographers Alexei Ratmansky, Justin Peck, Pam Tanowitz, Jamar Roberts, Lauren Lovette, John Heginbotham, among others. She has performed at the Bolshoi in Moscow, the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris, France, the Chicago Dancing Festival, the Vail International Dance Festival in Colorado and in New York City at Fall for Dance at City Center, the Joyce Theater and at the Koch Theatre at Lincoln Center, among others.

Patricia has written several essays for dance publications. One entitled "Why I Dance" in January 2015 for Dance Magazine and one for Dance Spirit Magazine in April 2013. She performed as Maggie Anderson in the musical "Brigadoon," directed and choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon at Encores! City Center. She starred in the music video "The Dark Side of the Gym" for The National and also appeared as a guest performer on "The Tonight Show." She is a repetiteur for Justin Peck. She staged "In Creases" for the Boston Ballet, Ballet Arizona and for members of the American Ballet Theatre, and "Heatscape" in Dresden, Germany at the Semperoper Ballet. She was an Associate Producer on the 2020 Broadway revival of "West Side Story."

She is devoted to creating a nurturing and positive environment of authenticity, inclusivity, vulnerability and belonging in all that she embarks upon, especially as she ventures into producing work for artists she admires, most recently Adriana Pierce's #QueerTheBallet. She and her husband, Justin Peck welcomed their daughter, Lucia Isabella, in March 2021.

CRAIG SALSTEIN (Associate Choreographer) was born in Miami, Florida and began his training at the Ballet Academy of Miami at the age of eight, continuing his training with the Miami City Ballet. In 1995, he was the Grand Champion of Ed McMahon's "Star Search."

Salstein joined American Ballet Theatre's Studio Company in 2000 and the main company in April 2002, and was promoted to Soloist in 2007. He is also one of a set of triplets. Salstein's repertory

with the Company includes Mercutio in “Romeo and Juliet,” the Bronze Idol and the Head Fakir in “La Bayadère,” Birbanto in “Le Corsaire,” Gamache in “Don Quixote,” Puck in “The Dream,” the first sailor in “Fancy Free,” the peasant pas de deux and Hillarion in “Giselle,” the Champion Roper in “Rodeo,” the Neapolitan Dance in “Swan Lake,” Eros in “Sylvia,” the Devil in “Three Virgins and a Devil” and leading roles in “Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes,” “Gong,” “In The Upper Room,” “Sinfonietta” and “Symphonic Variations.” He was an ensemble member and dance captain of the revival of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s “Carousel” on Broadway, which was choreographed by Justin Peck.

ABOUT THE SHOW’S CREATORS

JEROME ROBBINS (Conception, Entire Original Production Director and Choreographer) is world-renowned for his work as a choreographer of ballets as well as for his work as a director and choreographer in theatre, movies and television. His Broadway shows include “On the Town,” “Billion Dollar Baby,” “High Button Shoes,” “West Side Story,” “The King and I,” “Gypsy,” “Peter Pan,” “Miss Liberty,” “Call Me Madam” and “Fiddler on the Roof.” His last Broadway production, “Jerome Robbins’ Broadway” in 1989 won six Tony Awards® including Best Musical and Best Director. In addition to two Academy Awards® for the 1961 film “West Side Story,” he received four Tony Awards®, five Donaldson Awards, an Emmy Award®, the Screen Directors’ Guild Award and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. Mr. Robbins was a 1981 Kennedy Center Honors recipient and received the French Chevalier dans l’Ordre National de la Legion d’Honour, He died in 1998.

ARTHUR LAURENTS (Book) is the two-time Tony Award®-winning author of the musical plays “West Side Story,” “Gypsy,” “Do I Hear a Waltz?,” “Hallelujah Baby!” and “Nick and Nora,” as well as the screenplays “The Snake Pit,” “Anastasia,” “The Way We Were” and “The Turning Point,” among many others. His plays include “Home of the Brave,” “The Time of the Cuckoo,” “A Clearing in the Woods,” “Invitation to a March,” “My Good Name,” “Jolson Sings Again,” “New Year’s Eve” and “Come Back, Come Back, Wherever You Are,” the last three produced at his favorite theatre, George Street Playhouse. He has also directed plays and musicals for the theatre, among them “I Can Get It for You Wholesale,” “Anyone Can Whistle,” “The Madwoman of Central Park West,” three revivals of “Gypsy” (Angela Lansbury in 1974, Tyne Daly in 1989 and Patti LuPone in 2007), the original “La Cage aux Folles” and the 2009 revival of “West Side Story” on Broadway. His books include the memoir

Original Story By and the recent Mainly on Directing: Gypsy, West Side Story and Other Musicals. He died in 2011.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (Music) was a world-renowned conductor, composer, Tony Award® winner and 20th century musical icon. Bernstein composed several iconic Broadway works including "On the Town," "Wonderful Town," "Candide" and "West Side Story." His orchestral and choral works include his three symphonies, his theater work "Mass" and his much beloved "Chichester Psalms," among many others. He was the music director of the New York Philharmonic and conducted the world's major orchestras, leaving behind an enormous legacy of audio and video recordings. His books and television programs, including the groundbreaking Young People's Concerts with the New York Philharmonic established him as a leading musical educator. Bernstein was a lifelong outspoken humanitarian, advocating for the civil rights movement, Amnesty International, AIDS awareness and research and the end of the Cold War, alongside countless other causes. Bernstein's centennial was celebrated from August 2017-August 2019, generating over 5,700 events worldwide. He died in 1990.

STEPHEN SONDHEIM (Lyrics) wrote the music and lyrics for "Saturday Night," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," "Anyone Can Whistle," "Company" (Tony Award®), "Follies" (Tony®), "A Little Night Music" (Tony®), "The Frogs," "Pacific Overtures," "Sweeney Todd" (Tony®), "Merrily We Roll Along," "Sunday in the Park with George" (Pulitzer Prize), "Into the Woods" (Tony®), "Assassins," "Passion" (Tony®) and "Road Show," as well as lyrics for "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "Do I Hear a Waltz?" and additional lyrics for "Candide." "Side by Side by Sondheim," "Marry Me a Little," "You're Gonna Love Tomorrow," "Putting It Together," "Moving On" and "Sondheim on Sondheim" are anthologies of his work as composer and lyricist. For film, he composed the score of "Stavisky," co-composed the score for "Reds" and wrote songs for "Dick Tracy." He wrote songs for the television production "Evening Primrose," co-authored the film "The Last of Sheila" and the play "Getting Away with Murder" and provided incidental music for the plays "The Girls of Summer," "Invitation to a March," "Twigs" and "The Enclave." His collected lyrics with attendant essays have been published in two volumes: Finishing the Hat and Look, I Made a Hat. In 2010, the Broadway theatre formerly known as Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed The Stephen Sondheim Theatre in his honor. He died on November 26, 2021.